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ABSTRACT

The Quality Education Commission (QEC) was established to make recommendations about New Jersey's educational needs in the year 2000 and beyond, study the Quality Education Act, provide opportunity for public input, and advise the governor on further action to take. The lack of clear student performance goals and accurate assessment tools, together with an inefficient school structure, are partly to blame for poor student performance. The commission recommends that New Jersey school reform follow the national goals initiative with state-specific goals. Clear, statewide educational objectives and curriculum standards should be established as well as periodic assessment and accountability systems. School-based management should be adopted with the support of the state and local boards of education. Preschool education should be available statewide, and class sizes, especially for at-risk and disadvantaged students, should be reduced. The school day and year should be extended to accommodate special programs. Finally, teachers should have more opportunity for professional development and training. Chapters in this report examine numerous issues connected with the following topics: defining quality education; educational organization to provide quality education; measuring quality education; funding quality education; and gaining public support for quality education. Six appendices include a list of QEC members, a list of report contributors with acknowledgements, a financial issues background paper, a school-based management matrix, memoranda of comment, reservation or dissent, and a 121-item bibliography. (JPT)

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ALL OUR CHILDREN

A VISION FOR NEW JERSEY'S SCHOOLS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The Report of the Quality Education Commission

EA024 798

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COVER

The Indian Avenue
Elementary School
in Bridgeton

Pictured are
Christin Bartley
Jason Bonner
Kelley Campbell
Jeffrey Cash
Jonathan Goldsboro
Tiree Johnson
Robert Merritt
Christopher Passaretti
Dequan Santos
Willie Smith
Antonio Sydnor
David Wagner, Jr.

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ALL OUR CHILDREN

A Vision for New Jersey's Schools in The 21st Century

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary and Recommendations 1

Preface 1

CHAPTER 1

What is a Quality Education?

Student Goals 3

Curriculum Frameworks and Standards 4

Early Childhood Programs 4

Integrated Social Services 6

Inter-agency Collaboration 8

Equal Educational Opportunities 8

Technology in Education 10

Technology in New Jersey's Schools 10

Collaborations with Higher Education 13

CHAPTER 2

How Do We Organize to Provide a Quality Education?

School Based Management 15

The Restructured School 15

School-Based Pilot Program 18

Magnet Schools 18

School District Consolidation 19

Teacher Training & Development 23

Teacher Recruitment & Compensation 25

Teacher Tenure 25

Restructuring the Department of Education 25

Lengthening the School Day/Year 28

Inventory of School Facilities 29

The Quality Education Act (QEA) & Infrastructure 30

School Bond Authority 30

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER — How Do We Measure a Quality Education?

Educational Testing 33
Report Card 34
Monitoring of Schools 34

CHAPTER — How Do We Fund a Quality Education?

Abbott v. Burke 37
Quality Education Act 37
Guiding Principles 37
Providing a Thorough & Efficient Education 38
Compliance with Abbott v. Burke 40
New Program Initiatives 40
Cost Control, Management & Efficiencies 41
- Budget Caps 41
- School Consolidation 41
- Health Plan & Pension Benefits 41
- Teachers' Salaries 43
- Business Functions 43
- Special Education Costs 43

Other Funding Issues 43
- At-Risk Issues 43
- Pensions & Social Security Costs 43

CHAPTER — A Fifth Question 45

Notes 48

Appendix

- **a** The Quality Education Commission & Staff 49
- **b** Contributors/Acknowledgements 50
- **c** Finance Issues Background Paper 55
- **d** School Based Management Matrix 59
- **e** Memoranda of Comment, Reservation or Dissent 60
- **f** Bibliography 63

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The Quality Education Commission was established by Governor Jim Florio in January 1991 to:

1) make recommendations about the educational requirements that will address the needs of New Jersey's children, communities and businesses in the year 2000 and beyond;

2) conduct a thorough study and review of the Quality Education Act (QEA);

3) provide opportunity for public input and discussion to identify the key issues surrounding the implementation of the QEA; and

4) provide the Governor with recommendations, based on that input, for modifications to and complements for the QEA consistent with the Supreme Court's decision in Abbott v. Burke on June 5, 1990.

The Commission's report and its recommendations are the products of 22 meetings since January 1991; three hearings open to the public that were conducted in March, April and May; school site visits; the testimony of more than 100 subject matter experts, school personnel, parents, and citizens from around the state and the country; and thousands of pages of testimony and research documents filed on behalf of individuals, educational organizations, affiliated interest groups and others.

Essentially, the Commission was confronted with two policy issues: the first concerns the provision of equal educational opportunities for children in districts around the state, especially the special needs districts identified in the QEA: the second is the failure of all our students, even those who are high achievers, to learn at levels necessary to compete with students from around the world.

Unequal educational opportunities, addressed most recently by the New Jersey Supreme Court in Abbott v. Burke, result largely from the funding disparities that occur between tax wealthy and tax poor school districts. In addition to disparities in programs, facilities and funding, however, our inner city children face social, economic and family problems on a daily basis that distract, thwart and even negate most attempts to educate them and prepare them successfully for life.

The failure of our students to achieve at high performance levels can be attributed in part to the lack of clearly defined, high-quality student performance goals for all students and the absence of a systematic program to measure how and when students ought to achieve these goals. These inadequacies are compounded by inefficiences related to a system of hundreds of school districts that are part of an ineffective educational delivery system.

The recommendations in the Commission's report attempt to address both these policy issues in the context of the education reform initiatives that should be implemented statewide.

The Commission believes that the framework for reform in this state should be the national goals initiative introduced in 1990. New Jersey should adopt those goals and supplement them with state-specific goals for foreign languages and vocational/technical education.

To achieve these goals, New Jersey should undertake to establish clear, statewide educational objectives, curriculum standards and frameworks and the periodic assessment and accountability systems that are required to monitor progress toward these objectives.

With the full cooperation of the Department of Education and the local boards of education, New Jersey schools must move toward site-based management that will allow those closest to the children in the classrooms—teachers, support staff, principals and parents—to make the decisions necessary for the

successful student outcomes required in our society.

To achieve these improved student outcomes, we will need more education. To this end, preschool programs should be available throughout the state and mandated in special needs and urban environments. Class sizes, especially for at-risk and disadvantaged students, should be reduced to accommodate an active, participative learning process and a variety of performance assessment methodologies.

The school day and year should be extended to provide scheduled time for remedial programs, for gifted and talented instruction and to provide opportunities for social programs to support those children who suffer from a lack of family support or whose socioeconomic conditions affect their readiness to learn and compromise their continued development as students and healthy participants in society.

Finally, in addition to empowering teachers through the implementation of site-based management in individual schools throughout the state, we need to provide professional development and training to enhance the skills and effectiveness of the nearly 80,000 dedicated teachers in the state. We must improve our recruiting of new teachers, provide more, and better, support for teachers in the classroom and provide mechanisms for recognizing the outstanding performers in the teaching profession and enlist their support in statewide efforts to improve education.

The recommendations that follow should be construed as a beginning, not an end, however. It is time for education to become more than a subject for debate reserved solely for educators, legislators and affiliated interest groups. Indeed, the contentious judicial, legislative and executive branch proceedings that have taken place in the past several years have not converged on commonly shared values, ideas and solutions. In addition to focusing on that shared objective, the Commission believes that parents, community groups, students and the business community must contribute to the discussion; they must become part of the solution.

All the citizens in this state stand to gain from efforts to improve the way our children are learning, what they are learning and their ability to develop into responsible members of a global society. And so everyone must become a part of the process to revitalize, perhaps revolutionize, education for every child.

These recommendations represent a first step. They ought to provide the basis for discussion around the state. It is the Commission's belief that they can contribute to the quantity and quality of change that is required for us to meet our responsibilities to all our children.

What Is A Quality Education?

The National Education Goals created by the National Governors' Association and announced in 1990 by President Bush should be adopted by the State of New Jersey.[1]

- create New Jersey-specific goals for foreign languages, and vocational/technical education.

[1] see Appendix E, p. 60

The state should establish its own curriculum frameworks and standards for what all students should learn. The frameworks should be: A) keyed from the national goals and state-developed goals; B) provide standards for each subject with appropriate interim benchmarks; C) provide models to reach these expectations but be flexible enough to allow innovation at the school level.

- implement statewide by 1993-94
- adapt, and where necessary, develop curriculum standards for national and state goals
- adopt multicultural approach across the curriculum.

High quality preschool education programs should be made available to all three and four year old children by the year 2000; the first priority should be to serve all poor children by 1995. Programs should be available at no cost to children living in poverty; a sliding fee scale should be used to make the programs available to more advantaged children.

- provide high quality, full-day, full-year programs with comprehensive services, including health, nutrition and family services
- include preschool education as part of curriculum reform through grade 6
- make full-day kindergarten available statewide and mandate for all children in special needs districts
- upgrade state licensing requirements to National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (NAECP) standards for all programs serving children under age 5, regardless of funding source
- require all staff who teach or administer early childhood education programs to be certificated.

The state should provide programs of integrated social services to all K-12 students and their families at accessible local institutions, using school sites wherever possible.

- provide flexibility to school districts and community organizations in designing types of programs and locations of services
- enable schools that provide these services to extend the hours during which buildings are open to students and their families
- encourage and augment the productive use of these services through revisions to health and life skills curriculum
- provide pre-service, cross-training and in-service training for school staff, teachers and social workers to facilitate identification of students who need these services.

An Office of Youth Services should be established to facilitate inter-agency collaboration among the departments that provide services to children from preschool through twelfth grade.

- establish a governor-appointed position of Director of Youth Services
- coordinate all services, strategic planning and management, evaluation of outcomes, streamlining of federal and state funding and operate as the single licensing authority for programs.

Programs that can help to ensure successful student outcomes for inner city children and those children who are socially, economically and emotionally disadvantaged should be implemented immediately in the special needs and urban districts.

The educational technology unit of the Department of Education should serve as the lead agency for coordinating K-12 educational technology applications and initiatives into a cohesive and focused agenda for excellence in education at all levels.

- establish advisory commission to develop statewide, five year technology plan
- include technology literacy in teacher education programs.

How do we organize to provide a quality education?

Local school boards throughout the state should develop plans for implementing and supporting school based management in their districts as soon as possible but not later than the 1996-97 school year. A pilot program with a minimum of 50 schools should be implemented in 1992; the pilot program should grow by a minimum of 200 schools in 1993.†

- include ability for site-based budgeting
- train all participants: school board members, principals, parents, teachers, staff and community members
- establish financial incentives as part of statewide pilot program.

† see Appendix E, p. 60

Legislation should be enacted to create a non-partisan commission similar in function and structure to that used by the Federal government to close military bases. The commission would be responsible for devising a plan to merge and consolidate by 1997-98 all districts that meet at least one of the following four criteria: are non-operating, do not provide a K-12 curriculum, have an enrollment of less than 2,500, or are recommended by the Commissioner of Education to be incorporated in the plan. The commission's plan should be submitted to the Governor no later than December 31, 1994.†

- plan submitted automatically to Legislature unless rejected by Governor
- plan becomes law automatically unless disapproved by Legislature

- provide financial incentives and eliminate certain barriers to encourage districts to consolidate voluntarily
- plan enables:
  - reduction in the number of operating school districts and creation of effectively sized school districts with greater autonomy for individual schools
  - improved delivery of educational programs by providing greater continuity
  - reduction of duplicative administrative expenses and reallocation of those monies to school programs.

† see Appendix E, p. 60

Teacher training and certification in the State of New Jersey should be strengthened to reflect what prospective teachers need to know about student learning and cognition, curriculum and assessment, and the influences of diversity—in culture, communication, and learning styles—on teaching and learning.

- mandate high academic requirements for all teacher education students
- create a demonstration grant program to encourage and support improvements in teacher education, including creation of professional development schools and clinical internships for beginning teachers
- strengthen and continually review regular and alternative education programs
- continue and expand scholarship opportunities and loan forgiveness programs to encourage those with proficiencies in mathematics and science, those who are bilingual and minorities to enter the profession of teaching and to increase participation by women and minorities in administration
- establish statewide initiative to promote teaching as a career
- develop reward system to motivate and recognize differences in contributions and competence
- strengthen partnerships between schools and New Jersey's colleges and universities to improve teacher training and development.

A task force should be assembled to review the process for tenure, to identify potential effeciencies in due process and to recommend improvements in the performance evaluation process.†

- membership should include representatives from the State Board of Education, the Department of Education, state teacher organizations, the New Jersey School Boards organization, and other constituent groups as necessary
- review three-year probationary period
- review performance and appraisal process and make recommendations for strengthening roles of supervisors and teachers
- develop plan to expedite due process.

† see Appendix E, p. 60

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The Department of Education should be reorganized to be more responsive to the curriculum and policy needs of school districts around the state; to establish clear educational objectives; to accommodate the emphasis on school site management, and to improve teaching and management practices.

- strengthen and expand the county offices to become the primary units of assistance and monitoring in each county
- Governor should appoint State Commissioner of Education for a fixed period of time that is not coterminous with Governor's term of office
- accompany reorganization of Department of Education with long term organizational development process
- correct problems and strengthen accountability with the financial management and accounting system at the Department of Education and in districts.

Local school districts, especially those that serve at-risk and disadvantaged students, should develop phased, flexible plans to extend the length of the academic school day and year to provide more time and greater scheduling flexibility for new and existing educational programs and programs that supplement regular instruction.†

- provide flexibility to school districts and individual schools to determine scheduling of academic day to accommodate at-risk and gifted and talented students, remedial, bilingual, English-as-a-second-language (ESL) and social services programs, so that special/individual instruction and services supplement regular instruction and are not a substitute for it
- provide time for increased, and improved, teacher professional development and training
- develop a phased program to extend the length of the school year to 220 days by the year 2000; 200 days by 1995-96; 190 days by 1993-94 (with priority to special needs districts).

† see Appendix E, p. 61

The Department of Education should maintain an inventory of all school facilities in the state. Every three years, the Commissioner of Education should report to the state Board of Education, the Governor and the Legislature on the condition of school facilities statewide, the estimated need, and a plan to address those needs, including the amount of bonding authorization recommended for a state school building program.

A state school building program should be established to provide grants to local districts to fund all or a major portion of specific capital projects. The grants would range from 25% to 100% of project costs with special needs districts receiving 100% of project costs. Those projects should be identified and priorities determined by the Department of Education. Initial priorities should be projects in the special needs districts.

- provide monies from state revenue bonds paid for and secured by annual state appropriations, with initial authorization of $1 billion for a four-year period.

A state school bond authority should be established to issue bonds for a state school building program; to serve as a conduit issuer for all financings for local school districts; to develop several architectural models of school facility designs for use by school districts around the state, and to supervise the construction of all school facilities in the special needs districts and any other districts upon request.

- encourage and support State Commissioner of Education's authority to order districts to construct facilities if such facilities are necessary to achieve a thorough and efficient education.

How Do We Measure A Quality Education?

The current structure of educational testing in New Jersey should be modified to require standardized tests at grades 4, 8, and 11 only; a revised assessment system, keyed to curriculum frameworks and standards for all students, should indicate what body of knowledge students know and what skills they have and can use within that body of knowledge. Further, the state should assure that its accountability testing requirements are adjusted over time so that the latest advancements in assessment methodology are incorporated into those requirements.

- eliminate mandated standardized tests in grades K-3

- expand assessment methodologies and plans beyond multiple choice testing to include performance assessment.

To create greater public accountability in all schools, the state should develop and implement an annual report card with accurate and timely data on individual school and school district performance. The report card should include data on academic achievement, staffing, costs, attendance rates and other relevant measures of school achievement.[1]

[1] See Appendix E, p. 5.

HOW DO WE FUND A QUALITY EDUCATION?

New Jersey's school funding system should be linked specifically to the costs of programs and services required to meet student performance goals. The same highly effective programs should be available to all students in New Jersey. Priority should be given to identifying the costs for those programs that will produce high academic outcomes for children in the special needs districts and other disadvantaged students.

- funding system for financing education in New Jersey should be guided by the following principles:
  - a financing system should be based upon student performance outcomes
  - a foundation amount or guaranteed funding level is an appropriate basis upon which to develop a financing system
  - the concept of affordability has applicability to both state and local revenues
  - over time, the majority of all state education aid should be wealth equalized to ensure equity
  - new state aid monies should fund initiatives necessary to achieve a thorough and efficient education
- identify strategies that produce high levels of student achievement, determine the cost of those strategies and incorporate those funding requirements in the foundation amount
- comply with Court's decision for thorough and efficient education in special needs districts, including permitting an annual adjustment to the foundation aid weighting factor for special needs districts
- exclude categorical aid from any district's budget cap
- require voter approval only if district's proposed budget exceeds its budget cap
- identify efficiencies in organization and management of school districts, and where appropriate, reallocate monies to school programs; areas that should be considered for review include: school consolidation, health plan and pension benefits, teachers' salaries and business functions
- develop plan for state to assume living expenses of handicapped students who are placed in residential settings
- retain the at-risk and the compensatory aid funding formulas and provide funding under the higher of the two amounts
- link at-risk aid to specific program initiatives necessary to achieve a thorough and efficient education.

The Legislature should amend the Quality Education Act to provide for 100% payment of all pension and social security costs by the state.[1]

1 see Appendix E, p. 61

When it comes to public education, there are two New Jerseys. One has good schools, the other doesn't.

In one New Jersey, teachers teach in schools that have adequate supplies and equipment; in the other, a guidance teacher meets with students in a coat closet.

In one New Jersey, students benefit from proximity to major urban centers of art and culture; in the other, "students [in Paterson] will get to know no more of William Carlos Williams than their peers [in Camden] know about the writings of Walt Whitman." [1]

One New Jersey supports a very high level of funding for education; the other countenances great disparities in spending among school districts and schools.

Too many students from our highest achieving districts fail to learn at levels necessary to perform the tasks demanded by our economy and required to compete with students from other nations. Gross inequities in programs, facilities and per pupil spending leave nearly 25 percent of our school children isolated and disenfranchised in the inner cities.

There are 619 school districts in New Jersey. Developed by custom and law, they are ensnared in a web of regulation and top-down management that stifles the effective and efficient delivery of educational programs.

Money alone is not the answer. New Jersey's Supreme Court is correct in suggesting that "without educational reform, the money spent on education may accomplish nothing...Unless a new approach is taken...schools—even if adequately funded—will not provide a thorough and efficient education." [2]

The new approach called for by the Supreme Court begins with a vision that is driven, in part, by the forces of an evolving, changing, world economy. The business community in New Jersey and throughout the nation has sounded an alarm. It warns us that the increasing shortage of qualified workers to meet escalating workplace requirements will have a negative effect on our competitive position.

Estimates say that by 1995, 14 million Americans will be unprepared for the jobs available. One major American corporation estimates that it will spend five years and $30 million to provide remedial instruction to more than half of its workforce just to attain fifth-grade skill levels in math and seventh-grade skill levels in English. [3]

"There is greater emphasis on ability to learn on the job, to be competent in the mathematics of quality control, to be creative, to identify and solve problems at work, and to participate effectively in cooperative work groups. Most everyone is thinking most of the time." [4]

Our vision must include providing an education that teaches young people to think, solve problems, learn about and then quickly apply new technologies, work in collegial groups and be prepared to change job tasks and processes more frequently.

"While it is not new to include thinking, problem-solving, and reasoning in some students' schooling, it is new to make it a regular aspect of the school program for the entire population—even minorities, even non-English-speakers, even children of the poor. Meeting this challenge will require a reorientation in which an emphasis on thinking pervades the whole education environment, from the earliest grades." [5]

The vision to reform education in the public schools in New Jersey and in the nation is based on more than an economic model, however: "Thorough and efficient means more than teaching the skills needed to compete in the labor market, as critically important as that may be. It means being able to fulfill one's role as a citizen, a role that encompasses far more than merely registering to vote. It means the ability to participate fully in society, in the life of one's community, the ability to appreciate music, art, and literature, and the ability to share all of that with friends." [6]

Producing students who can think, who can work cooperatively in groups, who can shift focus and strategy quickly and move up to new levels of proficiency and competency are common goals for all disciplines that work together to ensure the political, economic and social success of the state and the nation.

The Vision For New Jersey's Schools In The 21st Century

At the heart of our vision for quality education is the belief that all children can learn at significantly higher levels than we have ever known. These are the goals that we must set for all our children and we must provide equity in the educational opportunities for them to reach these goals.

Our vision is child-centered: we must motivate each child to achieve at his or her maximum potential through the development of an active learning system, one that encourages participation in the learning process.

We must seek ways to ensure that all children enter school ready to learn. We must be prepared to provide social services on an integrated and coordinated basis. We must develop an holistic approach to addressing the early childhood education requirements of the youth

in our state. We must face the harsh realities that have an impact on education in the twentieth century: "We're not teaching Ozzie and Harriet's kids anymore." [7]

We must stop looking at schools in isolation from their communities and the family environments that influence the child's achievement in the classroom. "We need to begin to think of schools as connections between our families, our neighborhoods, and our communities. Schools should be more than the buildings to which children come to learn reading, writing and arithmetic." [8]

We need to recognize, more than ever before, that teachers are the key to improving student performance. "The supply of qualified teachers, the nature of the preparation they receive, and the extent to which their talents are available to school children in different communities across the state are the critical factors that will make or break education reform efforts." [9]

We need to provide the opportunities for those school administrators, teaching professionals, staff members and parents to make decisions about how best to address the needs of the children in their schools.

And we must undertake a "grass roots" campaign to convince everyone in this state of the problems we face in education and their impact on all of us.

Finally, we need to propose realistic solutions to the most important challenges that face our children in an environment that is increasingly global and multicultural. To lead us to these solutions, we have posed four fundamental questions:

What Is a Quality Education?

How Do We Organize to Provide It?

How Do We Measure It?

How Do We Fund It?

In the answers to these four questions lie the potential solutions to a school restructure effort that will create one New Jersey with the same, high level of public education opportunities for all our children.

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A quality education should be defined in terms of clear student achievement criteria. "If we know what we want children to know and be able to do upon completion of their formal education, other decisions begin to fall into place." [10]

Student Goals

RECOMMENDATION

The National Educational Goals created by the National Governors' Association and announced by President Bush should be adopted by the state of New Jersey.†

As a first step, we need to develop goals-driven, outcomes-oriented definitions that address what it is we want our children to know and be able to do at critical points throughout their years in school. These clearly articulated statewide goals and standards will promote programmatic equity and help to produce high student outcomes. All children, regardless of the school district in which they are educated, should be provided with educational opportunities that are at the core of a belief in the ability of all children to learn.

The National Education Goals are ambitious, carefully developed and clearly stated. They set appropriate targets, and have attracted interest and support from the public, the media and a number of states around the country. The goals state that by the year 2000:

1. All children in America will start school ready to learn.

2. The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

3. American students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.

4. U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.

5. Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

6. Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and offer a safe, disciplined environment conducive to learning.

These national goals and their background materials are a good starting place. School children in New Jersey need to master higher order thinking skills. The national goals serve as an appropriate foundation for this purpose. In addition to the national goals (English, mathematics, science, history and geography) and goals mandated by state law (reading, writing, health, civics, physical education, and the arts), New Jersey should include goals for foreign languages and vocational/technical education.

We recognize that it is unlikely that these goals can be achieved in the time period described. But New Jersey's endorsement of the goals is an acknowledgment of an important national initiative. The themes that form the basis for the national goals should provide guidelines and incentives for education reform in New Jersey. The national annual reports that will monitor state and national progress toward achieving the goals for the next 10 years will provide valuable state-specific data that can be used to modify and supplement our initiatives in New Jersey.

Curriculum Frameworks And Standards

Linked to these goals should be dramatically changed school curriculum frameworks and standards that "must be clear enough to communicate the basic concepts, thought processes and broad skills that we expect students to know and teachers to teach. At the same time, they should not be so detailed and specific that they significantly constrain the ability of teachers to make a number of critically important instructional decisions, such as what materials to use, how to pace and sequence instruction or what learning tasks and activities are most appropriate." [11]

Curriculum frameworks provide a series of objectives that each student is expected to master at a given point in the school year. Pedagogical models and readings, a part of each framework, are not required but are provided as illustrations. Only the goals are required.

If a lesson were designed to have students able to grasp the concept of the separation of powers in American government, for example, the teacher might choose to use some of the recommended readings in the curriculum guideline provided for that grade and subject. In addition, the teacher might require students to

RECOMMENDATION

The state should establish its own curriculum frameworks and standards for what all students should learn. The frameworks should be: A) keyed from the national goals and state-developed goals; B) provide standards for each subject with appropriate interim benchmarks; C) provide models to reach these expectations but be flexible enough to allow innovation at the school level.

view tapes of the Watergate hearings, read the transcripts of the Nixon tapes, and use examples from other historical periods to illustrate the topic.

Students could be divided into the three groups representing the branches of government and conduct a mock impeachment proceeding. Students would be free to use the materials to develop their own approaches to the main topic. But these approaches would be different and would reflect student interests and student involvement in the learning process. Most importantly, they should result in each student's having mastered the concept of separation of powers in government.

Nationally developed curriculum guidelines and standards either exist already (mathematics) or are under development (science and English). These new frameworks will share common themes: higher standards in the disciplines; problem solving where basic skills are taught by engaging the student; multicultural elements; integration of content, skills, and disciplines; more content substance in lower grades; mixed ability instruction; cooperative learning; and attention to the cognitive development process in each child.

The Department of Education, with the extensive involvement of classroom teachers, should review these nationally recognized curriculum frameworks and standards, adapt them to state goals, and call for their implementation throughout the state of New Jersey as soon as possible but no later than the 1993-94 school year. In addition, New Jersey should develop curriculum frameworks and standards in history and social studies and foreign languages, vocational/technical education and the arts.

The entire K-12 curriculum should reflect individual student differences and include considerations of the diverse contributions of ethnic groups. Multiculturalism is not a subject to be reserved for study in history or social studies. It is an approach to learning that recognizes the diversity of human experience and the value of understanding that experience as a part of the complexity of human endeavor. It is not an attempt at Balkanization, but an acknowledgment of the importance of recognizing the variety of racial and cultural contributions to our society.

A multicultural curriculum also enriches and broadens what children know about themselves and others. It can make children aware that despite cultural, ethnic and racial differences, we are more alike than different. It can develop tolerance, respect and understanding of individual differences. It can prepare students to live in a global society and develop respect for all languages, traditions and cultures and reduce sexism, racism, intolerance and elitism. It can help children build a positive self image and self pride. [12]

The new curriculum must provide opportunities for students to prepare themselves to make meaningful contributions to the society in which they participate during and beyond the years of their formal education. Students should understand the principles surrounding their roles as citizens in a free, democratic society. They should be aware of the complexities that contribute to their own moral and physical well-being. They should have an appreciation of the impact of the global environment on their personal and professional lives. Finally, they need to understand how best to prepare themselves for and take advantage of career opportunities.

Early Childhood Programs

One of the most promising approaches to improving education outcomes for New Jersey's children is to improve their care and education before they enter the public schools. As the first education goal requires, we want all New Jersey children to start school ready to learn. One out of every 10 New Jersey families is on food

RECOMMENDATION

High quality preschool education programs should be made available to all three and four year old children by the year 2000; the first priority should be to serve all poor children by 1995. Programs should be available at no cost to children living in poverty; a sliding fee scale should be used to make the programs available to more advantaged children.

stamps and a growing number of children come to school hungry. We know that many children who spend their first years in poverty start school lagging behind, never catch up, fall farther behind and eventually drop out.

High quality preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-old children can do much to get all children off to a better start and, as a result, a better finish. Preschool programs are not a panacea. Even the best preschool program is only one part of a broader strategy for improving early experiences and development and for improving the quality of subsequent schooling from kindergarten through grade 12. [13]

The strongest evidence of the benefits of early childhood experiences outside the home comes from studies that find that preschool education for economically disadvantaged children at ages three and four can improve their long term educational success. Evidence exists that these students need less special education and achieve at higher levels.

Although the greatest benefits may be for those children who face serious problems related to the lack of economic and educational resources, there is no reason to believe that the effectiveness of early childhood programs ends abruptly at the poverty line. All children can be expected to benefit from high quality programs rather than the highly variable quality of programs that characterize the current day care market. [14]

Preschool programs that serve disadvantaged children should be designed to offer comprehensive services, including full-year, full-day child care with health, nutrition and family services. Preschool education should be part of a more general reform of education through grade 6. This reform should provide a continuity of experience through the use of a developmentally appropriate curriculum, comprehensive services, after school care, full-day kindergarten and year-round school for children who need it most.

Full-day kindergarten should be available

PARTNERING IN PRESCHOOL

In Union Township preschool classes, parents drop in often, not only to check on their children. Some bring snacks or lunch, others, cutouts to hang up for display. Many volunteer to read to the children or help the teacher in other ways.

Parental involvement is a key component of the federal Head Start Program, and Union's public school district has the extremely rare attribute of meeting Head Start criteria for all preschoolers in all schools. The township has done it that way for 14 years.

More than 10 percent of the town's 450 preschoolers are Head Start participants. That means more than $150,000 in additional federal money for the district each year. It also means better teachers and facilities for Head Start youngsters compared with their counterparts elsewhere, where programs typically are underfunded.

Meeting Head Start criteria means being able to offer the benefits of a child study team, comprising a learning disabilities consultant, school psychologist, speech and language therapist and social worker. The Union program includes a Handicapped Services Component that "provides for early identification and program intervention to service children with special needs."

But the district is especially strong in the area of parental involvement. During the 1990-91 school year, 150 parents volunteered more than 5,000 hours.

One of them was Denise Creekmur, who now chairs the program's Policy Council and serves on three other key committees. Her daughter Shanise, 5, is now in all-day kindergarten, another concept pioneered in Union more than a decade ago. Like Shanise, Creekmur's sons DeShawn, 11, and Jason, 9, also began their education as Head Start pre-K students at Livingston School.

"Parent involvement is the key to good education, plain and simple," Creekmur says. "That's what has the most effect on the children — knowing their parents care about what they're involved in. A preschooler is proud to point to letters on the bulletin board and tell classmates, 'Hey, my Mom did that.'"

About 85 percent of parents contribute to preschool education at Livingston School. Parents get involved not only in the classroom, but also on oversight and support committees such as the Policy Council, the Education and Social Service Committees, and the Health Network.

"We're always trying to recruit," says Creekmur. "And we find it easy. Parents feel comfortable working with the school from the start, because of the open-door policy in our classrooms. They can pop in any time, they're welcome in class, and they're anxious to help because they're encouraged to help."

Union's strong insistence on parental participation rests on the philosophy that parents are the primary factor in a child's development and learning. Parents as well as teachers and assistants can receive inservice training to help them identify special educational needs and to acquaint them with the appropriate programs and activities throughout Union Township.

Educators are increasingly recognizing the importance of early intervention to develop the motivation to learn. In Union, that motivation is reflected in unusually low truancy and dropout rates. District officials are strong believers in Head Start.

"It's a good program all the way around," says preschool Program Director Thomas Tsirikos. "Why not offer it to everybody? What's good for Head Start kids is good for all kids."

Quality education is not only education which prepares a student for success in the real world, but it is an education which teaches the respect for community and appreciation of foreign cultures for peace in our time. Quality education stresses real job skills, and real life skills. Quality education leaves a student prepared for the world and a world prepared for peace.

CORY WISHENGRAD

MANALAPAN HIGH SCHOOL
MONMOUTH COUNTY

statewide; it should be mandatory for all children in special needs districts.

State licensing requirements for all programs that serve children under age 5 should be upgraded to the standards set by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (NAECP). The state should require all staff who teach or administer programs in early childhood education to be certificated. Programs receiving state funds should be required to obtain NAECP accreditation by January 1, 1996, or within three years of beginning operation and maintain accreditation thereafter. The new licensing requirements should be applied to all settings regardless of funding source.

One benefit from a single set of standards will be to reduce difficulties encountered by programs that try to collaborate across agencies or funding sources and to allow programs to use money more efficiently to meet children's needs.

The estimate of costs for serving all disadvantaged three and four year olds in New Jersey—approximately 50,000 children—would be approximately $200-250 million per school year, in addition to available federal funds.

Integrated Social Services For Children

ago. As significant social institutions, such as the family and the church, undergo great changes in their structure and their effectiveness in the lives and behavior of the children in our society, more pressure is placed on the schools to fill the vacuum and fulfill many of the responsibilities that once were held by the family or the church. At times, we in the schools feel overwhelmed with these awesome responsibilities." [15] Schools need help if they are to fill this societal vacuum.

Clearly the readiness of all children, K-12, would be enhanced by offering social services either on school sites and/or in conjunction with school programs. Because these programs can be aimed at preventing problems and improving performance, they should be offered to all students in all districts but especially in urban areas and to at-risk students.

The following types of preventive programs should be among those available: primary and preventive health care services, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, pregnancy counseling, parenting skills, family crisis counseling, suicide prevention, academic counseling and tutoring, small group counseling on interpersonal problems, conflict resolution and negotiation, employment counseling, training and placement, summer and part-time job development, recreation, referrals to health and social services. [16]

RECOMMENDATION

The state should provide programs of integrated social services to all K-12 students and their families at accessible local institutions, using school sites wherever possible.

Once we commit to a goal that recognizes the importance of readiness for school, we need to ensure that children also have the appropriate social, emotional and physical support to help them succeed once in school.

"Schools have an enormous function to perform. That function has become more complex and more difficult than it was 25 or 50 years

Each school district, in concert with local community organizations, ought to have flexibility in designing the types and locations of services that should be available to all students. Where appropriate, these services also should be offered to families of students. Schools that provide these services should extend the hours during which buildings are open to students and their families.

The Lanning Square Elementary School in Camden

Captions are optional

Christopher Diaz

left to right ► Christina Lopez

Nancy Bermiss

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Funds to provide "one-stop" social services will include those provided primarily by federal programs. The state could provide seed money to support case managers who, even at single locations, could broker services from many current governmental programs.

The regular instructional program should encourage and augment the productive use of these services. This would include making curriculum revisions in areas of health and life skills, providing pre-service, cross-training and in-service training for school staff, teachers and social workers to facilitate the identification of students who need these services.

Such integrated social services are not new to New Jersey. The nationally recognized School-Based Youth Services Program, developed by the New Jersey Department of Human Services, provides a wide range of services to students in grades 8-12. Any student in the age group, 13-19, who has parental consent may participate in the program. The program served 19,000 students in 1990, about one out of every three eligible for the services. Funding is through grants ranging from $120,000 to $240,000 per site from general revenues from the Department of Human Services. In-kind contributions from each site are a requirement. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some success has been achieved: drop out rates have declined in New Brunswick and there has been a decline in teen pregnancies in the Pineland Center.

The nationally based Cities in Schools (CIS) program has been operating in two New Jersey locations: Newark and Jackson Township. Privately funded, the programs served 74 students as regular clients in Newark at Central High School this year (there were an estimated 100 special, limited contact clients) and 40 young people in the high school in Jackson Township.

While traditionally these programs focus on the high school population, young children and their families throughout the state would benefit from access to support and prevention programs of this type.

As Michael Kirst points out,"school linked services primarily should use dollars already being spent on children's services. For example, existing state and local expenditures can be used as matching funds to increase federal financial participation to a greater extent by making schools Medicaid eligible or using the federal JOBS program to provide school-based child care." [17]

Depending on the scope of the services offered, the case management techniques involved, the clustering of needs per school/district, the availability of repositioned state and county staff persons, and the need for teacher staffing of activities, the cost estimates for providing these services in the special needs districts would be approximately $42 million (for one-third of the students) to $125 million.

Inter-Agency Collaboration

RECOMMENDATION

An office of youth services should be established to facilitate inter-agency collaboration among the departments that provide services to children from preschool through twelfth grade.

The Governor should appoint the Director of the Office of Youth Services. The responsibilities of the unit will include the coordination of the provision of early childhood programs and other services for children in grades K-12, strategic planning and management, evaluation of outcomes, and streamlining of funding, both federal and state. The unit should be the single licensing authority for programs for the state. It is critical that federal and state funding streams be coordinated at the state so that local districts and schools will be freed of administrative problems and may concentrate on services to children and families with school-age children.

None of these preschool or social services programs can be provided without facilities. While the subjects of facilities and facilities funding will be discussed later in this report, it is important to note that the implementation of these programs and services should not be postponed because adequate facilities do not exist within the public schools. Public schools, therefore, ought to be encouraged and enabled to go beyond the bounds of their own school buildings to find space for these programs.

Equal Educational Opportunities

New Jersey's Supreme Court acknowledged the "tragic inadequacies" of the level of education offered to students in the poorer urban districts. It identified specific elements of educational programs that must be available for students in all districts such as computers, science education, foreign language, music, art, industrial arts and physical education.

The Court said that a "thorough and efficient education also requires adequate physical facilities." And it is clear that many of our children attend schools that do not meet that condition. "In an elementary school in Paterson, the children eat lunch in a small area in the boiler room area of the basement; remedial classes are taught in a former bathroom. In one Irvington school, children attend music classes in a storage room and remedial classes in converted closets." [18]

The children in poor, urban schools also tend to have greater guidance needs generally than children in middle-class or affluent school districts, especially in terms of preventive measures. Urban children enter school less prepared because they are less likely to be exposed

to learning aids. They are less likely to be vocationally mature because they are not exposed to an environment where stable work patterns are common. Their goals and values may not match what is expected in school or in the work world and therefore they are more likely to need vocational guidance. Urban educators point to the numerous personal and socioeconomic problems of these children that include parents' unemployment, nonsupportive families, frequent family dislocations, early pregnancies—even in elementary schools—drugs, and crime on the streets. [19]

Programs exist that are well suited for success in urban schools. They should be considered for adoption immediately in urban schools around the state. These programs can provide the kind of attention on a daily basis that inner city children require to help them overcome personal and socioeconomic problems. Such programs usually recommend that every attempt be made to address the special needs of these students by limiting class size or providing tutoring on a one-to-one basis.

Robert Slavin's "Success for All Schools," is an example of an effective, elementary school program. Slavin's program has been tried for several years in Baltimore and is being implemented in other elementary schools in several states. "Success for All Schools" provides preschool, full-day kindergarten, one-to-one tutoring for students achieving below grade level, a language development emphasis in the language arts program, a problem-solving, manipulatives-based mathematics program, a process approach to writing, cooperative learning, cross-age tutoring, and a school-based family outreach coordinator.

For secondary school students there is Theodore Sizer's "Coalition of Essential Schools." A restructured approach to secondary schools, Sizer's program puts 80 students into "houses" together with a group of math, science, language arts and history teachers.

The Division of Urban Education of the De-

SPECIAL SERVICES: TOOLS FOR LEARNING

Irvington's Special Services Program is out in front. The chances of its more than 850 students graduating from high school are about 98 to 99 percent, which shows the program is making the grade and a difference in students' lives — and the lives of their families.

Parents give the program high marks.

Angela Talbert's five-year-old daughter, Shante, began attending the preschool handicapped program in September 1990. "How they work with the kids is remarkable," Talbert says. "I really give them an A."

Talbert credits Special Services Director Murray Kravitz, the child study team and the special education teacher with keeping her informed about Shante's development and with giving her all the tools she needs to play her part in Shante's education. Those tools range from a free educational toy to workbooks containing words she can go over with Shante to advice on how best to correct Shante when she says a word incorrectly.

Once referred to the program, students complete a classification process involving a doctor's examination and a child study team evaluation. Irvington has seven teams, each comprised of a psychologist, a social worker and a learning disability teacher/consultant. Other specialists are called in as needed.

For students identified as handicapped, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) then are prepared on a computerized system that was set up about eight years ago. Placement is decided upon at this time, too. Some students receive supplemental instruction, that is, they remain in their home schools and spend one period a day with their special education teachers. Or, students may be put in self-contained classes of no more than 11 with a special education teacher for all or part of the day. Or, they may visit a Resource Room daily, where instruction, assessment and guidance are provided for no more than five students at a time. Some students are sent to schools outside the district, too.

Once placed, an annual review process brings together parents, the team and the teacher, who prepare the education plan for the following year. At that time, mainstreaming or integrating the student into a regular, age-level appropriate class for some part of the school day is considered along with a modification of the program, if needed.

Every two years, a full re-evaluation similar to the one done at initial classification is completed.

Classroom instruction is based on a curriculum that must be updated every five years. With input from child study team members, teachers, students and parents, Kravitz prepared the extensive Irvington special education curriculum and took a somewhat different approach, one based on his experience as a former teacher and child study team member.

"The curriculum is found in a hands-on guide," he says. "It's based on competencies, on what students should know. For example, for a primary school student, a key competency is the ability to count.

"The curriculum guide offers some activities teachers can follow to help the students who can't count, such as 'write numbers 0 to 9 on large cards' or 'prepare cards with different amounts of circles.'"

Future plans for the program include the formation of a pre-referral intervention team.

"This team's job will be to counsel parents and teachers to make sure everything has been done to help a child before he or she is referred to special education," Kravitz explains. "For example, the team might recommend moving a student to the front of the class."

Kravitz is happy to see a child leave the special services program when he or she is ready to attend regular classes, and he's determined to see that only those students who truly need the program's services are admitted. He and his staff also are pleased to witness the successes of students who require special education through out their school years. Some become valedictorians in their special schools. Some enter special college programs or vocations.

But no matter what their fate, all of Irvington's special services students — temporary or permanent — are part of a program that has been recognized at the national level as outstanding.

Education is a right, not a privilege. Everyone deserves the best education possible regardless of his/her socioeconomic background or race. Teachers should not have to bring their own chalk, erasers, etc. to school. Students should not sit in a classroom where the temperature is 30 degrees or 100 degrees. Every student should have the same academic opportunities. The same courses should be offered to all students so everyone can start on the same level. Some schools offer advanced placement (AP) classes, while others don't. This may seem minor, but it isn't. Students who live in urban areas are not receiving the same educational opportunities as are available in suburban schools.

CHERISE ADAIR

EASTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

partment of Education already has implemented one such program, known as the Comer Project. It calls for "urban schools and school districts to create a school climate that supports improved outcomes for all learners based on the research and demonstrations documented by Dr. James Comer and the Yale University Child Study Center." [20]

The plan will establish collaborative relationships with schools, school districts, community-based organizations, and higher education. It is projected that by June 1994, 68 urban schools will be involved in the implementation; the schools will be selected from among the 30 special needs districts. Thirty-six schools began the project in the 1991-92 school year.

RECOMMENDATION

Programs that can help ensure successful student outcomes for inner city children and those children who are socially, economically and emotionally disadvantaged should be implemented immediately in the special needs and urban districts.

Technology In Education

In the classroom of the past, "students sit in rows of desks, passively absorbing lectures and memorizing facts." [21] In the classroom of the future, students are connected to information resources that make them active participants in the learning process. The catalysts for this revolutionary change in the way students learn are computer and interactive fiber technologies.

Computers, fiber communications, videodiscs, satellites, interactive television, electronic databases, electronic mail and bulletin boards are important, new educational technologies that offer New Jersey's educational system the potential to realize new ways of teaching and learning.

These technologies also offer expanded access to educational resources and information; increased opportunity to interact with quality instructors and learning tools and an effective, efficient delivery mechanism for the administration of educational services.

In the learning environment created by educational technology, a teacher assigns a topic and arranges for a number of resources including computers. The students then are free to explore whatever aspect of the general topic interests them the most: cultural, political, or historical. One student may be interested in the role of the media; another may want to examine the impact on the literature or art of the period.

It is up to the student to access, organize and present the information. The possibilities for learning that is individualized, cooperative, and interdisciplinary create an atmosphere in which the student and teacher work together to create an exciting learning environment.

Technology also can help to address inequalities in educational opportunity. Distance learning, for example, provides access to students in remote locations. And access to technology can help to develop critical thinking skills that have been identified as important to help reach improved student performance outcomes. "Computers should be seen as intellectual resources that allow students to search out and master...the skills to strategize and reason, select, and connect one piece of logic to another." [22]

Technology In New Jersey's Schools

New Jersey's Department of Education formed

an educational technology unit in 1983 that acts as a clearinghouse for educational technology information. One project, the Satellite Educational Resource Consortium (SERC), is a distance learning program delivering math, science and foreign language courses via satellite to 45 schools and more than 500 students in New Jersey.

Two other state agencies, New Jersey Network and the Department of Higher Education, have developed educational technology programs.

New Jersey's educational technology projects are initiated, funded and implemented on the local district level. Consequently, there is great disparity among districts in terms of planning for technology, the types and amounts of educational technology available, and the levels of penetration and integration across the curriculum.

East Orange, Lawrence Township and South Brunswick Township school districts have comprehensive, five-year technology plans, technology coordinators and extensive staff development programs while many other districts deploy technology haphazardly and rely on staff to educate themselves.

Similarly, technology activities like Bergen Tech's sophisticated fiber-based distance learning network that delivers courses over phone lines to 16 high schools and to Bergen County Community College either are in preliminary planning stages or are beyond the means of other districts.

Although the majority of educational technology applications are student-centered, administrators are beginning to incorporate technology into budgeting, student records and other administrative functions. Some districts are buying individual software programs dedicated to specific functions while others are networking and linking their individual systems into an integrated administrative system.

The Department of Education's Educational Technology Unit should act as an information

THE ELECTRONIC "CLASSROOM"

Imagine a geography class that lets you witness an earthquake or volcanic eruption almost as it happens. Afterward, your instructor calls in a "visiting" expert on short notice to help explain it to you. You're sitting in New Jersey, but your instructor and the expert are somewhere else in the world.

Welcome to Honors Geography, offered to sophomores in Bergen County and taught from the University of Alabama. The course is one of many applications of "distance learning," a concept that provides access to current, expert, first-hand knowledge by means of two-way, interactive television (ITV).

Similar to video teleconferencing, distance learning is one of several developments that are changing the definition of "classroom" from a brick-and-mortar facility to a system of information exchange. It enables two-way remote video interaction between teachers and students. The efficient and reliable flow of large amounts of voice, video and data is made possible by modern telecommunication facilities such as satellites and fiber-optic transmission lines.

Another driver of fundamental change in the learning process has been recent advances in computer capabilities. For example, new storage methods are re-designing the way research "papers" are "written." With today's technology, students can consult electronic "stacks" of news clippings, video footage, pictures, graphics, animation, music and voice tracks. From these, they compile multimedia presentations instead of the traditional "ten pages, typed, double-spaced."

According to Maureen Cerrato, who teaches grades 10-12 at Bergen County Technical High School in Hackensack, the most significant impact of the electronic classroom is the fact that students have taken charge of their own learning.

"The teacher has become more of a guide than a lecturer," says Cerrato, who has taught at the middle and high school levels for 15 years. "We provide students with the background information, we plan the activities, and we facilitate, but the students themselves are now doing the work in the classroom. And they're loving it."

Cerrato teaches senior-level history, geography and political science using Hypercard, Apple's laser disk-operated electronic stack program for its Macintosh personal computer. One assignment in this year's U.S. Constitution and Government class is to size up a 1988 presidential candidate in terms of 12 key issues. Students search through a collection of video clips, newspaper articles and paid commercials, all stored on laser disk. Grades are based on how well the information is analyzed.

In geography, the class is divided into groups, each responsible for reporting on a certain culture. The groups develop their own electronic stacks by scanning in pictures and music, while adding their own narration.

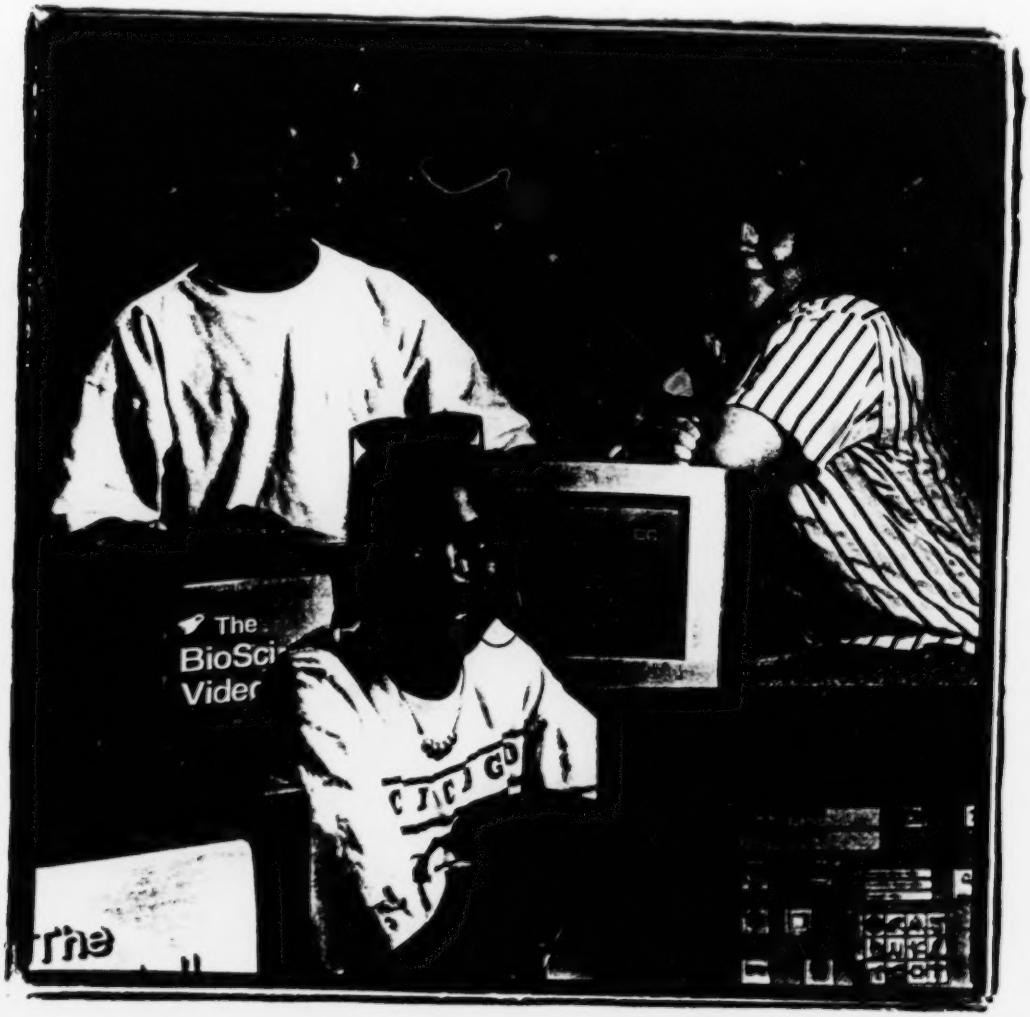
In 1990, Bergen County Technical Schools opened its Academy for the Advancement of Science and Technology, which houses the district's computer labs, state-of-the-art computer-assisted design and manufacturing (CAD/CAM) facilities, and an ITV laboratory.

The academy extends beyond high school instruction by offering teachers a multitude of in-service courses on systems and software programs. In addition, companies send seasoned engineers there to be trained on the latest CAD/CAM and design simulation technologies.

"The academy's philosophy is that students learn best by doing, exploring, being guided through the information," says Academy Director Leonard Margolis. "Here, the teacher is not the central figure in the learning process — the student is. The teacher's job should be to stimulate students to be problem solvers."

Bergen Tech is the hub of Bergen ITV, Inc., a county-wide fiber-optic network that connects facilities at 12 other high schools and three colleges. The network allows participating schools to share more than 30 specialized courses, such as Asian studies, musicianship, robotics, Italian, Japanese, Russian and calculus. Without ITV, many of these courses would not be offered at schools where student interest is low.

Cerrato says that the electronic classroom has enhanced her work considerably. "Students are challenged, motivated and self-directed," she notes. "A multimedia approach to instruction provides exciting opportunities in the classroom—not only for them, but for us as well. We are ready to meet those challenges."



left to right ► Mark Park

Megan Ceres

Crystal Ann Riddick

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RECOMMENDATION

The educational technology unit of the Department of Education should serve as the lead agency for coordinating K-12 educational technology applications and initiatives into a cohesive and focused agenda for excellence in education at all levels.

resource for evaluations of educational technology equipment, software, and technology projects. It should set the technical standards for connectivity so that schools can communicate with each other via voice, video or data networks. It should develop technology guides that include information on planning for and implementing technology into a curriculum, using technology to increase management and operating efficiencies, funding technology and technology training for teachers and administrators.

In addition, this unit should conduct a comprehensive study of educational technology in New Jersey and develop a five-year technology plan to identify the needs of New Jersey's educational system and economy. The five-year plan should be developed by an advisory commission comprised of leading technology-using educators, the Department of Higher Education and business and industry. The five-year plan should emphasize planning for technology, technology training for teachers, providing the basic technology infrastructure to all schools and funding for model technology schools.

The technology unit should focus on working with an independent consortium of technology firms and institutions, including but not limited to, (Stevens Institute, AT&T, Bellcore, New Jersey Bell, IBM, Apple, and New Jersey Network) that will be responsible for developing the technology, providing direct services to districts and coordinating the use of technology for and in schools across the state. The Department of Education should provide assistance with the educational curriculum applications.

One of the functions assigned to the technology unit should be the creation of a comprehensive, student-based data set and information management system that will allow the tracking of students throughout the system from early childhood, pre-K, through post-graduate.

All school districts should develop customized, district-specific technology plans to meet the state technology goals and develop technology applications best suited to their individual districts.

Teacher training and development programs should include provisions to address the issue of technology literacy for all teachers. Programs that have been developed for teachers by the New Jersey Commission on Science and Technology for mathematics and science should be expanded to include computers and other educational technologies. Mentoring programs should be developed that link preservice teachers with experienced, technology using teachers. As new technologies become available, teachers should have access to the training that will be necessary for them to make use of these technologies in an educational environment.

Collaborations With Higher Education

Schools in New Jersey should continue to look to the higher education community for assistance in addressing the needs of young people from the inner cities. Teacher workshops, summer seminars and institutes for high school teachers and students, and computer (and other technology) training programs and research

I think that improving our state's high schools and middle schools is of relatively little use if the pre-schools and grammar schools are not first upgraded. Instead of reacting to the problem we should try to prevent it. If children receive quality education from the very beginning, they will be more likely not to drop out of school and will probably have a greater interest in continuing their educations. By waiting until the problem has manifested itself in the lives of the students, we are trying to correct a difficult problem which probably could have been prevented. We also should try to improve the home life of many of these students. A stable family is a positive support for students. They are more likely to concentrate on their studies if they do not have to worry about family and economic problems.

SHARON MURPHY

PEER INFLUENCES

Every spring at Passaic High School, an important student selection process takes place. The process appears to be as rigorous as college entrance. To pass muster, candidates must demonstrate maturity, responsibility, enthusiasm, sensitivity, consideration for others, confidence, organization skills, assertiveness and a positive attitude. They are evaluated on the basis of a four-hour interview, a five-page essay and the comments of teachers and administrators. Usually, only one in eight applicants makes the grade.

In this manner, some 20 incoming seniors are selected to be peer leaders — role models who help groups of randomly chosen freshmen adjust to the demands of high school. A peer leader's job is not to teach, preach or pass judgment, but to listen, motivate and be a friend.

Passaic High's Peer Program is aimed at developing a student's communication and listening skills, tolerance of differences, confidence, problem solving ability, and sense of community responsibility.

Research shows that the system works. A recent Educational Testing Service/Princeton University study determined that peer leadership programs have a positive effect on student attendance, grades, discipline and self-image.

Often, the best endorsement of the process comes from students themselves. Many of Passaic's senior peer leaders, including Xiomara Solano, also participated as freshmen.

"Between my freshman and junior years, sometimes all I could think about was becoming a peer leader," says Solano, who plans a career in nursing.

She recalls how the program helped her develop the confidence to overcome the intimidating transition to high school. "I was very shy," she recalls. "I didn't say much at all, and I didn't care about school very much."

These days, Solano is involved in at least a half dozen student activities, including debating and drama. She is also president of her class.

"Now," she adds, tongue in cheek, "they call me 'The Mouth.'"

For freshmen, the program begins when they are randomly (and unexpectedly) pulled from gym class and marched off to the library. There, the seniors treat them to songs, puppet shows, commercial spoofs, or other entertainment aimed at convincing the new students of the program's benefits.

At the initial meeting, each boy-girl leader couple is matched to a group of between 12 and 14 freshmen. The bonding process takes place later, during an entire day of outdoor team-building and group-cohesion games. Subsequently, groups meet once a week to share thoughts and experiences about school, relationships, family life, or other matters relevant to personal growth.

For peer leaders, the experience is part of a five-credit class in leadership training. The seniors meet daily to study group behavior and to bring peer group experiences up for case discussion. Peer leaders, not faculty, are responsible for solving any problems relating to non-participation among their freshmen.

They are also in charge of the program's outreach to freshman parents. The seniors bring parents and freshmen together for group activities and to discuss family issues and parenting problems. The outreach has drawn unprecedented numbers of parents to evening meetings, thus strengthening ties between school and community.

Passaic High's Peer Program was designed by the Princeton Center for Leadership Training, which conducts training and workshops for teachers, school administrators, parents and peer leaders. Since 1979, the Princeton Center has established similar programs in 100 urban and suburban school districts in the Northeast and in Georgia, including 18 in New Jersey.

strengthen and improve education and teaching in schools around the state.

With campuses in three of the largest urban areas: Newark, New Brunswick and Camden, Rutgers-The State University provides educational support for students and teachers in a variety of programs that address literacy, basic skills, improving SAT scores, and science and computer technology for inner city schools. [23]

Examples of collaborative programs and initiatives directed at school districts with special needs exist all around the state. Limited English proficient Hispanic students in grades 6-10 from Perth Amboy, Elizabeth and Passaic public schools, for example, can seek assistance through Project Adelante, a program offered at Kean College.

Glassboro State College has made extensive commitments to Camden and other urban communities in South Jersey. These commitments include working with new teachers, providing minority achievement programs and English as a second language (ESL) programs for students and teachers.

Ramapo College works with West Side High School in Newark in a partnership that includes faculty, staff, parents and students throughout the year, including a summer residential requirement that increases in length over the four years of a student's high school career.

New Jersey Institute of Technology's Center for Pre-College Programs provides instruction in math and science education to more than 3,000 students, and training for their teachers, in the Newark and neighboring area schools. Approximately 80 percent of the students in the more intensive programs have enrolled in college and 25 percent have elected to study science, engineering or technology.

School Based Management

RECOMMENDATION

Local school boards throughout the state should develop plans for implementing and supporting school based management in their districts as soon as possible but not later than the 1996-97 school year. A pilot program with a minimum of 50 schools should be implemented in 1992; the pilot program should grow by a minimum of 200 schools in 1993.†

Individual schools throughout the state must have the authority, responsibility and capacity to produce excellent outcomes for all students. Indeed, once provided with the necessary tools and supportive environment, individual school staffs should be held accountable for achievement of targeted student outcomes.

Many of New Jersey's schools are not working satisfactorily, and every school is stifled to some significant degree by the accrued mandates, bureaucratic habits and detailed work rules of years of top-down management. Incremental changes in these arrangements hold little hope of producing the educational outcomes our children and our state require. Radical, even revolutionary, changes are required.

Restructuring, a term used to describe the new strategy for educational change, has at its core the desire to produce higher student outcomes. To achieve these higher outcomes, individual schools must be given real authority to make decisions that they consider relevant for their students.

There is no one model waiting to be created. On the contrary, schools should be tailored to their communities' needs. School arrangements should not be mandated; they require a considerable period of trial and error. Staffs will need to undertake extensive professional development to prepare for and continue to grow in their new work. Schools will need encouragement, support and assistance from the district and the state to restructure themselves. For a state as diverse as New Jersey, the flexible and decentralized strategies of restructuring present a unique opportunity for comprehensive and system-wide change.

The Restructured School

At the heart of site-based reform is shared decision making that engages teachers and staff, parents, students, and the community in basic decisions about curriculum and programs. These decisions typically extend to budget allocations within the school, staff hiring decisions, and the professional development needs of the school.

Site-based decision making results in more flexibility for the local school unit. Each school can develop school programs and designate facilities, staff and strategies to achieve student performance outcomes that are keyed to statewide goals, standards and curriculum frameworks.

Usually, the process takes the form of a school council made up of teachers, parents, and the principal. Staff, community members and students often participate as council members or serve on ad hoc committees. All elements of the school and the district —administration, supervisors, teachers and local board—must buy into the process and be comfortable with the framework of the council. In any framework, the selection of members must be a democratic process within each group.

The school principal's leadership will remain an essential ingredient in every successful school. As bureaucratic lines are redrawn and teachers and parents take on new roles in running their schools, the principal must concentrate on collaborations, encourage new initiatives, and, with the council, assume the responsibility and accountability that goes with significant educational change.

An important element of school-based management involves the authority for each school to manage its own budget. As part of the move to school-based management, local school boards should develop processes whereby each school site submits requests for financial resources based on the programs necessary for the school to meet district goals and objectives—with few, if any, prior restrictions on how the resources should be used. The allocation to the school site is determined by school site needs, goals, and objectives, and the availability of resources. Once made, the allocation belongs to the principal and the local school council. [24]

SHARED DECISION-MAKING & OPEN COMMUNICATIONS

Communication and collaboration are the keys to the way in which Galloway Township manages its eight public schools for its 2,700 students.

Since 1978, the township has formed its own version of a school management system that's being used in several places around the country, including Dade County, Fla. and Jefferson County, Ky. Newark has started a pilot program.

Site-based management is shared decision-making about curriculum, programs and spending that involves teachers, administrators, parents and the community. It also shifts the primary management of individual schools to principals and teachers — those closest to students.

Rita Hanna, business administrator - Galloway Township schools, puts it this way: "It's a wonderful, collaborative effort to achieve quality education for our students. Every aspect of school life is reviewed by the community, the principals and the teachers. We are a big family, and we keep all communication lines open."

Committees and councils are the heart of the township's communication-intensive system. Community councils, made up of community members and principals, develop goals for their individual schools that tie into district goals. District-wide textbook, curriculum, special program and family life committees are made up of teachers, program directors, community members and principals. And, at the school level, the teachers of one grade form unit committees. Their ideas are presented regularly to principals by unit leaders.

Further, principals, assistant principals, directors, district administrators and the superintendent exchange information at administrators' meetings.

From ideas shared among these various groups, principals and teachers garner clear, child-oriented views of how funds allotted to their schools should be spent.

Also central to the township's site-based system is budgeting at the school-level. The district handles all salaries, building repairs and fixed costs, like health benefits. It also establishes a per-student allocation for various subjects, like Math and Language Arts. Then, each school receives its funds based on the sum of the per-student allocations times the number of students.

Working together, principals and teachers make spending decisions. Teachers order supplies, including textbooks and audio-visual materials. Principals see to the comfort and smooth operation of the buildings, manage student services and assist teachers.

Michele Lerman, principal of the recently opened Roland Rogers School with 551 students, finds that site-based management in Galloway Township brings all the advantages of shared decision-making — such as better decisions and improved performance — with none of the disadvantages — like role confusion and delays. "Our district is not that large. We have only seven principals, who share similar goals," Lerman says. "So, we don't waste time or effort.

"In districts that don't have site-based management, I believe administrators like myself feel powerless. In our district, where we all feel involved, we take ownership of our schools, we work harder and we work more positively."

This sense of ownership also encourages exploration into better teaching methods, like the Cooperative Learning Program in which the district is involved. "With Cooperative Learning, students of various ability levels in reading, for example, form a small group," Lerman explains. "Each student is assigned a different responsibility in the group's assignment to reach a particular goal. "The group is considered successful when all students within the group have reached the goal. To do this, students must cooperate and share knowledge.

"Cooperation, like this, is important in the workforce, which we're preparing our students to enter."

Site-based management, Hanna feels, is here to stay. "We're beginning to operate our schools like private industry operates — by involving a lot of people and listening to what they are saying."

School districts—both school boards and central offices—will form another critical link in the implementation of site-based reform initiatives. The district must, of course, continue to secure state and local resources needed to accomplish its goals. At the same time, it must shift the locus of initiative to the school level and promote site-based management, with each school accountable to the district and the public for accomplishment of its objectives.

The district administration should become a resource that provides information and assistance in managing the choices that exist for each school. Central office responsibilities should include providing assistance in adapting state goals and reviewing school plans that demonstrate how school sites will meet those goals. In addition, the central office should monitor compliance and performance in each school site and coordinate associated efforts such as teacher selection and coordination with other agencies.

The school districts would continue to manage the budgets and provide expense data and analysis to each individual school. In addition, individual schools would develop non-fiscal data (demographics, student and teacher characteristics, performance results) that can be used, year over year, to monitor progress and direct continuing efforts in establishing goals.

In addition, local teachers must be a key factor from the outset in the planning, development and support of the district's site based decision making process. Only a fundamental reconsideration by all parties of their rights and responsibilities can empower councils to make decisions that are appropriate for each school site.

Critical to the success of this restructuring process is community-wide partnership and support. Site-based decision making and the resulting school councils provide an improved forum for parental and community involvement at the school site.

"Parents offer a unique perspective to the

Mt. Hebron School in Upper Montclair

Cara Goodwin

left to right ► Vincent Iron Jefferson

Paul Brown

Shannon Ellis

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The ultimate goal of a quality, world class education is to understand and respect the diversity that exists in society. Not only must a student acquire skills necessary for a job, but he/she must learn about history, culture and the other studies that help to define human nature. He/she must have optimism and hope. Only then can we save ourselves and benefit not only humanity, but everything on this planet.

RASHMI PENDSE

NORTH VALLEY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
BERGEN COUNTY

school system, providing the link educators claim is too often passive or missing from the child's social and academic progress. They can contribute significantly to improving the quality of the curriculum and to lowering education costs." [25]

The successful implementation of school-based management will require the training of all participants in the process. Local school board members, parents, teachers, principals, school staff and community members should be trained so that they understand their responsibilities, the need to operate within the provisions of school law, budgetary restrictions, the opportunities for leadership and how to deal effectively with the process.

Site-managed schools are likely to evolve over time and to develop distinctive characters, goals and operating styles—to become less and less alike. The challenge at all levels of policy development will be to assist schools and guarantee quality in a system whose basic premise is variety, not uniformity. [26]

As the concept of distinctive, accountable local schools evolves, those that are effective in managing their educational programs and the support functions for those programs could opt to become more autonomous, with fewer and fewer requirements imposed on their programs from above.

The business community can play an important role in providing assistance in the training of participants in local school councils to develop and strengthen management and governance capabilities. Business representatives might also serve on local school councils to bring an added perspective to school restructuring and site-based management and to provide business leaders in New Jersey with first-hand perspectives on the day-to-day needs of our schools.

School Based Pilot Program

All schools should be eligible for a per pupil incentive for implementing site-based management.

Initially, a statewide pilot program should offer incentives to local school districts to apply for two-year grants of $50,000 per school for the creation of a new site-based plan with realistic goals, student performance outcomes and endorsement by the district. First priority should go to schools in special needs districts. The Department of Education's Division of Urban Education has, as part of its plans for addressing reform in the 30 special needs districts, determined that each school in those districts will have an opportunity to receive five days of training on school-based planning. [27]

The Department of Education should extend the offer to provide the appropriate training, technical assistance, encouragement, and information to all schools that are selected for the pilot program.

Following completion of the two-year pilot, during which participating schools will not be subject to monitoring, the Department of Education should review the plans and performance improvement objectives of each school site and make recommendations for implementation statewide.

With the Department of Education's continued leadership and assistance, all schools should participate in a school based management process by 1996-97. Waivers from this requirement should be granted only with the approval of the local school board and superintendent, a two-thirds vote of the faculty and proof that the school meets or exceeds student performance goals.

Magnet Schools

Designed around specific disciplines or thematic areas such as art, technology, business, music, the humanities or science, magnet schools can provide options for students within district boundaries. Care must be taken, however, to assure that these schools do not create another system of inequities by draining talented students and support from the other

schools in the district.

Examples of successful magnet schools exist already in New Jersey. The Vroom Learning Center in the Bayonne school district invites applications from parents from the entire district and offers an innovative, comprehensive elementary curriculum that goes well beyond basic skills to include science, the arts and language study. Established in 1977 as a magnet school, the Vroom Learning Center was planned and implemented with the cooperation of the administration, the principal, teachers and parents.

Science High, one of three high schools in Newark with a specialized curriculum, was established in 1974 to focus on preparing students for careers in the sciences and mathematics. Approximately 700-800 students from public and parochial elementary schools around the city apply each year for 150 places in the freshman class.

Recently announced is a plan to create math and science centers in each county to underscore the commitment to the fourth national goal. Coupled with a renewed emphasis on technology applications, these efforts could lead to substantive changes to strengthen and enhance both the academic and vocational programs around the state.

Initiatives like these and others provide models for implementation statewide.

School District Consolidation

By the year 2000, we envision a public school system throughout New Jersey that is governed by organizations that are very different from the current school districts in terms of size of enrollment, geographic area, and responsibilities.

This vision includes consolidating small districts and those not providing a K-12 instructional program, as well as reducing in size some of the large urban districts. As a result, instructional programs will be strengthened. Education will be provided more efficiently and will be financed on a more equitable basis as a result of the larger bases of property tax wealth.

EMBRACING DIVERSITY BY CHOICE

More than 90 percent of the students in Montclair, New Jersey score above the national average in scholastic achievement tests. For the last three years, SAT scores among high school students there have been climbing, while the national average has fallen. The dropout rate is remarkably low, the rate of college matriculation, remarkably high.

What's behind these results? Educators point to several factors, not the least of which is the Montclair district's magnet school plan, whereby elementary and middle schools are differentiated not by neighborhood, but by the academic concentrations offered to students. Statistics show clear and consistent improvement in student performance across the district since the plan was instituted 15 years ago.

Magnet schools have won almost universal approval among parents in one of the state's most ethnically, racially and economically diverse communities. Montclair has a population of about 40,000, 51 percent of which is White, with the remaining 49 percent Black, Asian or Hispanic. The city is primarily residential, with most of its work force commuting either to Newark or New York City. About 40 percent of residents hold college degrees, and median income is substantially above the state average.

"Montclair has a great mixture of people," comments Rita Serok, whose two daughters Erica, 10, and Natalie, 8, attend Watchung Elementary School. As a result, "People want a lot of different things from their schools."

The Montclair initiative started out as a school desegregation plan. In 1976, several magnet schools were developed and district boundaries redrawn. After about five years, however, racial imbalances were returning. Minority enrollment was on the rise as more White parents opted to send their children to private schools. Moreover, parents expressed concern about inequities in funding between magnet and non-magnet ("neighborhood") schools.

Montclair responded by designating all elementary and middle schools as magnet schools. Special-focus programs are in the areas of gifted and talented; fundamental; international studies; the arts; science and technology; and Montessori.

"I think with each school having something unique to offer, there's a sense of unity within the district, rather than every school for itself," says Serok. Each school, she adds, develops relationships that extend beyond its immediate neighborhood to the entire community.

Recently, the district established a "family magnet school" for grades pre-K through 2. The school serves as an "extended family," providing activities and programs for about 175 pupils after regular school hours.

After choosing the school they wish their child to attend, parents register their selection with the district central office. The child is assigned to the chosen school provided there is racial balance and the school is not over-enrolled. First choice is granted in more than 95 percent of the cases.

An Educational Testing Service Policy Information Paper reported that choice has brought about competition among Montclair's schools while increasing accountability for results. In order to attract students, principals must keep their programs on track and working well.

Parents, educators and board members surveyed by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University consistently cite the following as positive outcomes of the Montclair plan:

—School integration has been achieved, and even housing patterns have changed;

—The school district is responsive to the community;

—Montclair's dropout rate has fallen below 3 percent;

—Incidence of racial confrontations has sharply decreased;

—The rate of college matriculation among high school graduates has risen to about 80 percent; and

—Parent involvement in education has increased.

"Come into our school at any given time, and you'll see volunteer parents all over the place," notes Serok, herself a past president of the Watchung PTA and currently chairman of the School Review Committee.

"Parents in Montclair have come to expect great things from their school system. They're willing to spend the money, but they want to see results."

From all recent indications, they're getting their money's worth.

A quality education is one that provides a student with an environment open to personal growth and self-fulfilling knowledge. It is both a mentality that one acquires and an experience that one never forgets. It marks an individual and forges an identity for him/her.

ELENA LAGUARDIA

RECOMMENDATION

Legislation should be enacted to create a non-partisan commission similar in function and structure to that used by the federal government to close military bases. The commission would be responsible for devising a plan to merge and consolidate by 1997-98 all districts that meet at least one of the following four criteria: are non-operating, do not provide a K-12 curriculum, have an enrollment of less than 2,500, or are recommended by the Commissioner of Education to be incorporated in the plan. The Commission's plan should be submitted to the Governor no later than December 31, 1994.

In addition, with greater authority for decisions regarding curriculum, staffing, and resource allocation being made at the individual school sites through school-based management, the role of school districts will shift to that of defining curriculum goals and providing services to schools to help them achieve those goals. This realignment of responsibilities will enable more schools to be served by a single school district. As a result, by the year 2000, the total number of districts could be less than 100.

Merging and reducing the number of school districts is not a new topic in New Jersey. Over the last 25 years, a variety of efforts has been initiated by the state to encourage districts to merge, but only two districts have done so in the last decade. We are well aware that incentives not only have not worked in New Jersey but have failed in other states as well. The realignment of school districts in other states has been successful only when mandated.

We have studied the issue of school district realignments extensively, but we lack the resources and the time to develop a detailed plan for merging and realigning specific districts. In addition, a strategy to consolidate schools should complement the move to school-based management, and therefore a phased implementation would be advisable.

No later than 15 days after the plan has been submitted to the Governor, the plan in its entirety shall be submitted to the Legislature, unless the plan has been rejected by the Governor. Within 60 days of its submittal to the Legislature, the plan would be legally binding in its entirety, unless both houses of the Legislature pass a joint resolution disapproving the plan. If the plan is rejected by the Governor, the commission has 60 days to submit a new plan.

There are 619 school districts in New Jersey that have responsibility for providing education programs for their students. Of these, there are 555 districts that operate schools at the elementary and/or secondary levels, and 27 non-operating districts that send their students to schools in nearby districts. There are also 37 units that have legal status as districts and primarily provide specialized instruction and related services for vocational and special education students on a county-wide basis. The system is rife with administrative inefficiencies and unnecessary redundancies.

Approximately 65 percent of the operating school districts do not provide a K-12 curricu-

Westfield High School

Henry Wu

left to right ► Michelle Maraffi

Scott Harris

Molly Rock

The quality of education is a difficult situation to address. There is a great need for a new system of education. New Jersey spends a great deal of taxpayer dollars on education. We must revamp and examine the system. There are some districts that have a surplus of funds, whereas other areas are struggling to meet basic requirements. If we don't educate all, then we are in for a crisis: the enlightened carrying the burden of the maleducated. People are all created equal and in the true spirit of competition, all must begin on equal footing. It's much the story of young horses in a race, one raised on the finest grain in the best housing and facilities, the other left to feed on its own with no housing. The two would not be equal and neither are the students of New Jersey.

SAMUEL GONZALEZ, JR.

VINELAND HIGH SCHOOL
CUMBERLAND COUNTY

lum. At issue is the ability of small districts to provide a comprehensive educational program. Education from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade is a continuous process that requires a close relationship from one grade level to another. The oversight of that process is best accomplished under a single administration. For the most part, small, K-6 or K-8 districts cannot provide program continuity, articulation and diversity as effectively as K-12 districts.

In addition, the enrollment in many school districts, especially in grades 9-12, is small enough to jeopardize a comprehensive curriculum. The best educational program, as described above, is one that goes well beyond minimum standards. High schools with enrollments below 400-600 students find it increasingly difficult to provide advanced placement and other courses that enrich and broaden the educational program. With the prospects of even more limited funding in the future, the problems of smaller districts will become exacerbated.

From an educational perspective, small school districts contradict the vision of a quality education because they can engender a sense of isolation that contributes to a narrowness of educational outlooks and outcomes.

From an organization and management perspective, the system is inefficient and costly. "The large number of New Jersey school districts with low enrollments is a key factor in the aggregate expenditure level in this state for administrative salaries, and variations in district enrollment levels are a significant factor in explaining interdistrict differences in administrative salary costs per pupil and as a percentage of current expense outlays." [28]

In addition, the non-instructional business functions of operating a district: transportation, purchasing, payroll, bill processing, accounting and auditing can be very expensive on a per pupil basis in small districts. Cost savings could be realized by reducing the built-in redundancy and added administrative expense associated with the replication of many of these functions across 619 separate school districts.

For example, there are more than 400 school districts with enrollments of less than 2,500 students. Consolidating these districts into K-12 districts is estimated to save approximately $50 million in central administration annual operating expenses. Assuming that 200 of the districts also could take advantage of a building closing or the avoidance of new construction, and that such savings involving both personnel and building maintenance expenses are about $500,000 on an annual basis, additional savings would be another $100 million.

School districts that should be consolidated by 1997-98 include: all K-6 and K-8 school districts and constituent districts of a 9-12 or 7-12 regionalized high school, all non-operating school districts that send their students to another district, all school districts that are the sending district in a sending-receiving relationship and all school districts with fewer than 2500 students.

The goal of the moving to K-12 systems statewide is to reduce the number of operating districts and create more effectively sized school districts with greater autonomy at the individual schools and with greater educational opportunities for all students. Consolidation would benefit the students in at least two ways: it would improve the delivery of educational programs by providing continuity and assuring the articulation of complete K-12 educational programs and it would reduce the duplicative expenses associated with administering the school programs and reallocate those monies to the programs themselves.

Consolidation of schools to form K-12 districts statewide could result in a reduction in the total number of school districts to less than 250 by 1997-98.

Clearly, a commission that develops a legally binding plan to consolidate districts will finally force consolidation and realignment of districts. Yet such actions would be preferable if under-

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taken on a voluntary basis by districts. Therefore, certain financial incentives should be available immediately and certain barriers eliminated immediately to help districts consolidate voluntarily, so that realignments begin as soon as possible.

The major hurdle to overcome in most districts is the requirement that total district budget costs must be apportioned throughout the district based upon property tax wealth. In effect, if two districts merge that do not have equal property wealth, the wealthier households will pay more. Depending upon the magnitude of the impact in a "new" district, state funds should be made available over several years to phase in this impact.

Other barriers that need to be addressed include enabling early retirement programs targeted for merging districts to ensure staffing flexibility, and streamlining and simplifying the process to change school district boundaries. Incentives that should be considered include state funds for all or a portion of feasibility studies, facility renovation/expansion, and other one-time costs.

Teacher Training And Development

RECOMMENDATION

Teacher training and certification in the state of New Jersey should be strengthened to reflect what prospective teachers need to know about student learning and cognition, curriculum and assessment, and the influences of diversity—in culture, communication, and learning styles—on teaching and learning.

Changes in goals, curricula, testing, school leadership and other school-reform elements will be successful only if we can look to the teachers in the classrooms around the state for implementation. Teachers will need to work with parents and administrators to adapt curricula, with new perspectives and contents, to their schools, and will need to know how to foster the learning of every child at high levels that are unprecedented.

For this, teachers will need excellent training before they enter the classroom and a high quality of continuing professional development throughout their careers, especially in the demanding years of transition to the system we propose. "Effective teaching, and especially teaching for higher-order understanding, requires a range of teaching methods that have been found to be highly dependent on the extent and quality of training that teachers have received." [29] High academic requirements should be mandated for all teacher education students. Starting with strong preparation in the liberal arts and sciences, teacher education coursework must have extensive field-based or clinical features and must be, in short, a program of professional education that leads to a state teaching license or certificate.

New Jersey's alternate route to teaching has been successful in recruiting significant numbers of persons trained in math and science, minorities and graduates of selective colleges. As yet, we do not know whether these individuals will be highly successful teachers. The state has been making efforts to improve the retention rate of those who teach mathematics and to improve the amount and quality of training and supervision.

Both regular and alternative teacher education programs will require strengthening and

Quality education, in my opinion, provides an individual with knowledge and at the same time teaches him how to use it. It teaches him to be analytical and not just a regurgitator of facts. A quality education teaches people about their past so that they can esteem themselves highly and go on to be productive contributors to their communities. It is imperative that we learn about other cultures early on in life so that we don't view other cultures as mass deviations from the "truth." Finally, a quality education instills a desire to make a difference in one's community and world.

MALIK LOVELY

BRINGING MATH AND SCIENCE TO LIFE

"As a teacher of the youngest students, my job is to help them make sense of the world around them, to see the patterns," says Alice Ruffer, a kindergarten teacher at Southern Boulevard School in Chatham.

Children have a natural curiosity about how the world works, she contends, but in the elementary grades, teachers tend not to take advantage of that inquisitiveness.

"We're more linguistic by background than scientific," says Ruffer, who has more than 30 years of experience teaching all elementary grades. "We get discouraged teaching math and science, and as a result, kids get turned off."

Ruffer was one of 40 teachers selected this year to participate in the Bellcore Teacher Institute, an initiative to help teachers in selected New Jersey school districts make science and math exciting to the students. The program, conducted by Bell Communications Research (Bellcore) and funded in part by the National Science Foundation, is aimed at exposing students to the practical outcomes of science and math, while increasing their awareness of technical career opportunities.

Bellcore volunteers work with teachers and administrators to develop a plan that will help meet a school's math, science and computer needs.

During the summer, participating teachers get four weeks of training at Bellcore's Technical Education Training Center in Piscataway. There, they attend sessions on math, science, computers, telecommunications, business concepts and innovative teaching and learning methods. Technical demonstrations at research facilities in Livingston, Navesink and Morristown also may be in the syllabus.

"When I toured the Bellcore facilities, all I kept saying to myself was 'I wish my colleagues were here,'" Ruffer comments.

One particularly memorable demonstration for her was Minitel, France's videotext information access system available to 21 million citizens via the public telephone network.

"It was a real eye-opener for me," Ruffer says.

"The American feeling that we're tops in everything is short-sighted. We should instill in our kids a sense of belonging to a world community. What happens in Japan and in Europe has a big impact on us."

In the fall, volunteers from Bellcore work with participating teachers and their colleagues — sometimes in class — to help apply what was learned. This year, kindergarten and first grade children at Southern Boulevard School will be shown what sound patterns "look" like on an oscilloscope and how they are recorded. They also will learn how information is fed into computers. "The volunteers are really effective role models," Ruffer says. "I want these kids to see that all of our wonderful inventions come from ordinary people, like you and me. Not just men, but women, too. From people who persevere, who keep trying even if they get set back.

"Students have to take responsibility for their own learning. That's the environment I want to provide, and I think the Bellcore people are helping me establish it."

The Institute formally concludes in early December. Students in all grades will be presented with Young Scientist Certificates for demonstrating science achievement.

The Bellcore Teacher Institute is being offered to other corporations for replication. The program's designer, the International Institute for Educational Excellence, Inc., provides training to assist corporate personnel in program implementation.

continual review if they are to serve the schools we seek to create. New Jersey should create a demonstration grant program to encourage and support improvements in teacher education, including the creation of professional development schools and clinical internships for beginning teachers, and means to disseminate information about them.

Those teachers already in the classroom should participate in school-based staff development programs that provide the opportunity for professional growth and the capacity to succeed at high levels with all students in restructured schools. Staff development programs should be an intensive, continuing part of any school site program. Teachers should play a key role in the development of these programs to address their needs, keyed to the accomplishment of the school site's educational objectives.

Even though we think primarily of teachers when we think of staff development, we must develop programs to address the needs of all staff: administrators, paraprofessionals, clerical, service, and custodial staff.

Programs for current and new teachers will require a close and comprehensive partnership between school authorities and New Jersey's colleges and universities. These institutions must work together to strengthen teacher training and professional development. The goal of these collaborative efforts should be to make the immense knowledge present in higher education accessible to teachers and students in the elementary and secondary schools in times, places and formats appropriate to their needs.

"Schools, colleges, corporate education centers, libraries and museums must be thought of as part of a single system...There is a systemic relationship, guided by organizational commitment and leadership, between basic research, laboratory developments, and application. These three components do not just exist as separate enterprises; they interact with each other for their own advancement just the way schools, colleges and other educational institu-

tions must if our goals of successful teaching and learning are to be attained." [50]

Teacher Recruitment And Compensation

New Jersey, in common with most states, will have difficulty in recruiting sufficient highly skilled teachers to replace those who will retire or leave for other reasons during the next several years. The state must be prepared to underwrite the training of prospective teachers, particularly in areas of high demand such as mathematics and science, bilingual and minority teachers, and women and minorities in school administration. Scholarship opportunities should be expanded and loan forgiveness programs created for these purposes.

Higher salaries and smaller classes should be provided as incentives to prospective and experienced teachers to encourage them to teach in urban school districts. Teachers must be assured that school facilities provide adequate resources for instructional purposes and that the facilities themselves are safe environments that are conducive to learning. A statewide initiative should be undertaken to promote education careers to high school seniors and college students.

Motivation and retention in any profession is very much a function of recognition and reward for performance. Education, like most effective organizations, should develop reward systems that motivate and recognize differences in contributions and competence. Effective processes for replacing poor performers with more promising ones should be developed and implemented.

Recent reform efforts in the state of Kentucky, for example, have included initiatives to recognize outstanding achievement by individual teachers. The Kentucky Distinguished Educator Program, which includes provisions for self-nomination, provides a stipend to outstanding teachers. Teachers who participate in the program are asked to serve as teaching ambassadors to spread the message that teaching is an important and fulfilling position, to assist the Department of Education with research projects and staff development efforts and to accept assignments in schools or school districts that are not performing satisfactorily.

Teacher Tenure

There are many who feel that the problem with education is tenure. Detractors say that a "lifetime guarantee" of employment is unreasonable and unrealistic and that such guarantees provide no motivation for teachers to perform. Supporters of tenure assert that it guarantees due process, not lifetime employment; it protects teachers from political and other outside influences and is accompanied by a process to remove ineffective teachers.

A thorough, professional evaluation process with appropriate training for supervisory personnel is critical for a system that seeks to retain its best performers and help others improve their skills. Teacher tenure must be administered by a vigorous personnel management system, and must be linked to continuing professional development. The evaluation process should be accompanied by a corresponding system of support for teachers who need to acquire or improve teaching skills.

The state task force should be composed of representatives from the State Board of Education, the Department of Education, state teacher organizations, the New Jersey School Boards Association and other constitutent groups as necessary. The task force should examine critical areas connected with the earning of tenure, the process for adjudicating complaints against teachers and ways of providing flexibility for teachers who want to move from one district to another within the state.

In addition, the task force should: review the three-year probationary period to determine if it should be extended to provide a longer period for new teachers to demonstrate their effectiveness; review the performance evaluation and appraisal process and make recommendations for strengthening the roles of supervisors and teachers and develop a plan to expedite due process so that teachers can be returned to or removed from classrooms swiftly and efficiently, maintaining continuity of instruction for students and saving money for school districts and teacher organizations.

RECOMMENDATION

A task force should be assembled to review the process for tenure, to identify potential efficiencies in due process and to recommend improvements in the performance evaluation process.

Kentucky's Education Reform Act, for example, alters the process for dismissal of certified personnel by local school districts. New regulations reduce to 35 days the amount of time it takes from notification to the teacher of the intent to dismiss to a decision whether or not to dismiss. An additional 30-day period is provided during which an appeal may be made to the courts.

Restructuring The Department Of Education

To achieve high quality educational outcomes, the Department of Education and each of its units must function differently than they do at present. The Department of Education has been perceived as a "regulator and critic that sits astride a top-down system of service delivery." [51]

In light of the recommendations that call for

The Vroom Learning Center in Bayonne

Christopher Ramos

left to right ► Melissa Portento

Larissa Bianchini

RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Education should be reorganized to be more responsive to the curriculum and policy needs of school districts around the state; to establish clear educational objectives; to accommodate the emphasis on school site management; and to improve teaching and management practices.

a process of shared decision making and that emphasize statewide goals and curriculum standards for all students, the Department should broaden its focus to provide a leadership role in education with an emphasis on educational outcomes.

The Department should adapt and expand the national goals to accommodate what New Jersey students should know and be expected to do at strategic intervals in their formal education. The Department of Education should develop curriculum standards, set student performance standards and assess performance on a regularized basis against those standards.

The Department of Education should develop standards for teacher training, certification and development and create a policy framework to endorse and stimulate site-based management. The Department's principal role as a regulatory agency should continue but the emphasis should shift to outcomes rather than processes. Responsibility and authority should be slowly shifted lower in the system and wherever capacities are developed.

Because the school is the primary educational unit, all other units must work in concert to support the educational functions within schools and classrooms.

As responsibility and authority are shifted lower in the system, i.e., to the school site, the Department of Education should review its organizational structure to determine how it best can provide the necessary support for the state's schools as individual schools become more autonomous. For the time being, the county offices should be strengthened and expanded to become the primary units of assistance and monitoring in each county. They should be provided with more resources; county staff personnel should be retrained and communications with schools and districts improved. The county offices should support the emphasis on educational improvements through curriculum and technical assistance and by coordinating those administrative and operations functions that can be centralized and that can provide assistance to the local school districts.

For the future, the Department of Education should reassess its organization and consider restructuring the county offices or creating another, alternative, intermediary entity that is based on student population. Significant retraining and rethinking, not to mention legislative approval of the appropriate modifications to the statutes, will be required to implement changes of this type.

The model outlined below centers on the strong executive leadership of the Commissioner with close control of the rule-making and adjudication process and emphasis on external affairs. To that end, the Governor's appointment of the Commissioner should be for a fixed period of time that is not coterminous with the Governor's term in office.

Services to teachers and students should include: establishing statewide goals and objectives; the selection and development of curriculum standards; technical assistance; in-

Quality education is an education that makes students want to learn. It depends mostly on the teacher's ability to encourage self-initiated growth. The basic purpose of a teacher is to guide students in their personal searches for knowledge. A teacher should not teach a class, he/she should teach individuals.

MARJORIE LATHROP

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stitutional practices; student assessment; teacher preparation, certification and development. Its responsibilities also would include technology, and adult and vocational education.

Services to students, families and communities should include: FamilyNet, pupil personnel services, bilingual and multicultural services, special education and direct services and school-community relations. In addition, the Department should encourage implementation of comprehensive, inclusive parental involvement programs that are developed with input from parent groups from around the state.

Operations responsibilities of the Department should include: finance and budgeting; compliance; planning, research and evaluation; infrastructure; legal services; information management and communications and public relations.

The reorganization must be accompanied by a long term, organization development process that is conducted with both Department of Education personnel and district involvement. With the coordination of the daily activities by deputy and assistant commissioners, the process should focus on making each unit an organization committed to the goals of achieving high levels of performance; the goal of the system will be to facilitate high performance levels from every student.

Immediate action should be taken to correct problems and strengthen accountability with the financial management and accounting system at the Department of Education and in the districts. A funding system, such as the one described later in this report, should be developed with performance and service indicators. The report of the Governor's Management Review Commission (GMRC) should provide guidelines for such an improved system.

Lengthening The School Day/ Year

In New Jersey, both the length of the school day and the school year are determined by local school districts. Under state law, however, the school year must be no less than 180 days and a school day must be no less than "four hours of actual work."

Many critics of the public education system in the United States suggest that additional time in the school day and year are required to improve student learning and capabilities. These individuals compare the length of the school year and the outcome performance of students in other countries and those in the United States as evidence of this need.

Opponents of this viewpoint argue that while student performance measures are substantially higher in other countries, it is unclear whether such performance is a function of one or more of a variety of factors such as longer "time on task," more homework outside the classroom, higher expectations of students, and parental and societal norms. Following the logic of their argument, the degree to which extending the school year may itself have a substantial impact on student performance is not known.

These perspectives and a review of material concerning the limited number of schools that have extended school years are inconclusive. Extending the amount of time that students are engaged in instructional settings and providing sufficient time for teacher training and development to occur on a regularized basis, however, should result in improved student outcomes.

In addition, students in remedial, gifted and talented, bilingual, basic skills, English as a second language (ESL) and other programs in which discrete segments of the student population are served would benefit from having specific class time devoted to these instructional activities. The alternative, removal from regular classes, serves only to isolate these students further from the mainstream.

Just as we have linked programs with performance outcomes and funding, moreover, the length of the school day and year should be linked to the programmatic elements that have been recommended to achieve the improved outcomes for all students in the state. We are not recommending "more of the same for longer periods of time"; we are saying that programmatic changes to reach high-quality performance outcomes for students could necessitate a reorganization and lengthening of the school day and year.

Several of the recommendations cited earlier in this report, for example, point to a need to extend the length of the school day and year, especially for at-risk students and students for whom social services and other non-educational services will be provided at or near the school site. Clearly, where decisions must be made by the state about moving slowly because of financial constraints, priority must be given to implementing longer school day and school year programs for these disadvantaged students.

There are different ways to consider how additional school days can be used. These include, but are not limited to, expanding "time on task" for all students, i.e., a universal program; using the additional time for remediation, i.e., only for

RECOMMENDATION

Local school districts, especially those that serve at-risk and disadvantaged students, should develop phased, flexible plans to extend the length of the academic school day and year to provide more time for new and existing educational programs and programs that supplement regular instruction.

students that need it; and using the time for curriculum enrichment for students who have mastered stated proficiency goals, i.e., a voluntary program. With regard to teacher training and development, additional time might be used to expand in-service opportunities to provide time for those teachers who teach the same subject matter and/or grade level to meet and exchange ideas or collaborate on approaches to classroom projects.

It is difficult to determine the costs associated with an expansion of the existing school day and year. In addition to the labor costs, there are the costs of operating the school facilities, which in most cases would necessitate the installation of air conditioning. The costs of extending the school day and year are not simply derived from calculating existing per diem costs per student and multiplying by the additional number of days.

To mitigate the impact of what could be substantial additional costs, the school year should be extended in several phases. During the initial phase, the school year should be increased to 190 days by adjusting the existing September to June calendar to reduce vacation and holiday time. This phase should be implemented no later than the 1993-94 school year. The second phase will require increasing the school year to 200 days by 1995-96. By the year 2000, the school year should be 220 days in all districts.

While these time lines may need to be adjusted because of the considerable expense involved in implementing a longer school day and year for all schools, it is important that the needs of the students in the special needs districts and other urban areas be given priority in the move toward lengthening the school day and year. Thus, priority should be given to implementing phases two and three first in the special needs districts.

Schools should have the flexibility and freedom to determine the length of the academic school day. Mandated courses, such as health, safety and physical education should be reviewed to determine whether performance measurements, rather than a required number of class hours per week, might be more effective in reaching the goals of requiring such courses.

Inventory Of School Facilities

New Jersey's public education system has substantial infrastructure needs that vary throughout the state. Accurate estimates regarding those needs—whether associated with new educational programs and technologies, shifts in enrollment, or substandard facility space—are not readily available because there is no centralized inventory of facilities from which capital needs can be determined.

We do know, however, that there are more than 2,200 public school buildings in use in New Jersey. Approximately 1,000 schools are more than 50 years old; 46 buildings are more than 100 years old.

Five-year long range facilities plans exist in which each district projects enrollment and proposes a strategy to provide sufficient physical space to meet these needs. The 1990-95 plans indicate that about $3.2 billion will be required for that period: $63 million to meet environmental requirements; $1.3 billion for renovations; $1.8 billion for new building construction and additions; and $65 million for equipment.

The Department of Education considers these plans to identify capital projects that local districts intend to undertake, rather than an assessment of actual facility needs. Based upon these plans, the Department has estimated capital needs to require $5-6 billion.

At an estimated average cost of $15 million per school, replacing the 46 oldest schools will require $690 million of capital; building 550 new facilities (25 percent of the system's existing physical plant) will require $8.25 billion.

By contrast, in school year 1989-90, school districts spent almost $632 million on infrastructure: $206 million of long term financing for such purposes; $343 million for maintenance and $83 million for capital outlays.

There are many components of what I would call a "quality education." Equal opportunity for all children to participate in an effective education process regardless of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds is essential to this new standard we are trying to set. Students should be influenced by bright, creative teachers who teach not what but how to think. Although a basic curriculum must be followed, teachers should understand that it is not knowledge but wisdom that creates a "quality" person and, therefore, teachers should not be afraid to incorporate lessons on values into their teaching.

SARITA TALWAR

A quality education is an education that is administered equally without regard to socioeconomic background; neither stripping the advantages of the affluent nor adding to the disadvantages of the less fortunate. A quality education is an education which prepares our citizens to uphold the moral and logical tenets of constitutional republicanism. It is an education which prepares us with the tools to use differences toward advantages, to glean from confusion founded by muddled thinking and policy and create order. A quality education prepares us to help others in a substantial and structural sense because we comprehend and adhere to the tenets of true humanity and not from self-interest founded in ignorance and want.

LAWRENCE BROWN

RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Education should maintain an inventory of all school facilities in the state. Every three years, the Commissioner of Education should report to the State Board of Education, the Governor and the Legislature on the condition of school facilities statewide, the estimated need, and a plan to address those needs, including the amount of bonding authorization recommended for a state school building program.

The traditional way for local school districts to raise monies for major capital projects has been through the issuance of general obligation bonds. Depending on the type of school district, voter approval may be required for a bond referendum.

Since 1981, more than 200 bond financings have raised in excess of $1.2 billion. Of this amount, just over $200 million was issued by 12 of the special needs districts. For the past few years, the annual amount of bond financings has been less than $160 million. Of the 15 bond issues presented to voters in the first six months of 1991, only two were approved.

The Quality Education Act (QEA) And Infrastructure

The magnitude of the infrastructure problem, coupled with the fact that there are serious facilities needs in districts all around the state, suggest that some degree of state support for debt service is necessary for all districts. This is not possible under provisions of QEA. Under QEA, the portion of a district's debt service paid by the state is the same as the state's share of a district's foundation budget. Only foundation aid districts, therefore, may receive state aid for debt service.

The state school building program should include two four-year phases. In the first phase, from 1992-1995, one billion dollars should be available with $250 million in grants provided each year. To finance the program, the state should issue bonds that would be paid for and secured solely by annual state appropriations. The proceeds of each bond issue should be provided to local districts as grants for which no repayment would be required. The bonds would be issued by a state school bond authority.

The annual debt service payments on the $1 billion of bonds to finance the first phase of the state school building program would cost approximately $80 million for 20 to 25 years, depending upon when and how bonds are issued and structured.

School Bond Authority

Districts now undertake their own financing, an inefficient and costly way to address building needs. The use of one authority can provide districts a cheaper way to raise capital. By combining several financings into one issue, economies of scale can be achieved, the costs of issuance can be shared among districts and market access can be timed better to minimize interest costs. Districts would be responsible for paying debt service on the bonds issued by the authority on their behalf, but the overall cost of borrowing would be less expensive than if the districts issued bonds on their own.

In addition, each district now must hire an architect and contractors to design school facili-

Science High School in Newark

Kristen Blackmon

Maryann Smela

Wendy Reid

Minaha Murray

Jacinda Holloway

Christian Oshiro

Of all American ideals, freedom is perhaps the most cherished. In the realm of education, this ideal is most clearly expressed through freedom of choice for parents and students of which school to attend. By allowing choice among public schools, competition would be introduced into our educational system, challenging each school to gain enrollment by offering a better product. Who benefits? The student who is now empowered to take advantage of the diversity of our school system, as well as the general rise in quality, which competition would herald. America's students of today— our leaders of tomorrow— are quickly becoming non-competitive on the global scale. This is no time for business as usual. By holding schools accountable for the quality of their curricula though a competitive system, we can assure that more than minimum required effort is put forth to train the minds of the next generation.

CHRISTOPHER J. PAOLELLA

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RECOMMENDATION

A state school building program should be established to provide grants to local districts to fund all or a major portion of specific capital projects. The grants would range from 25% to 100% of project costs with special needs districts receiving 100% of project costs. Those projects should be identified and priorities determined by the Department of Education. Initial priorities should be projects in the special needs districts.

ties, a process that is duplicative and wasteful. The development of prototypes and/or models, with options to accommodate specific geographic and demographic needs, would facilitate the construction process and avoid needless delays in obtaining approvals. At the same time, the models would ensure designs that equip buildings with the most advanced technology for educational purposes.

The school bond authority should be an entity separate and independent from the Department of Education. The members of the authority should be appointed by the Governor and have expertise in the financing, design and construction of school facilities. Annual operation costs of the Authority can be paid from user fees charged to districts for which the authority is issuing bonds, from annual state appropriations, or from some combination of the two.

Streamlining the processes for financing and designing school buildings and removing those responsibilities from the Department of Education and the local districts would allow the Department to focus on providing leadership and policy direction to local districts, and would enable school districts to focus on curriculum goals and providing services to schools to help achieve those goals.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the Commissioner of Education should exercise his authority to require the financing and construction of school facilities when it is found to be necessary for a district to achieve a thorough and efficient education. In that situation, the power of the Commissioner should supersede voter approval in the event a bond issue is defeated by voter referendum.

RECOMMENDATION

A state school bond authority should be established to issue bonds for a state school building program; to serve as a conduit issuer for all financings for local school districts; to develop several architectural models of school facility designs for use by school districts around the state; and to supervise the construction of all school facilities in the special needs districts and any other districts upon request.

Public education in New Jersey must move every child beyond a mastery of basic skills to the development of critical and analytical thinking skills. At present, not every student in the state has access to an educational program that meets those requirements.

Inner city school programs concentrate on enabling children to pass state-required tests, especially the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT), which have a basic skills perspective. Schools in affluent districts, on the other hand, deal largely with students whose mastery of basic skills occurs early in their school years. These schools offer curricula with more options and opportunities to develop the thinking skills necessary for success during and after school.

Since the state needs to monitor the effectiveness of schools through testing, assessment methods should reflect the logic of the new curriculum standards proposed in this report. These standards identify levels of achievement that move well beyond the HSPT.

Educational Testing

New Jersey mandates standardized tests in grades 2-12. Testing at virtually every grade level has not been the solution for declines in student performance. In addition, teachers and administrators are in general agreement that standardized testing in grades K-3 should be eliminated.

Once the state goals and appropriate curriculum standards have been determined, local districts should develop individual assessment plans with input from teachers and administrators. These plans should use assessment methods, including, but not limited to, standardized tests. The purpose of the plans will be to determine how well students are achieving and whether performance levels are improving and what measures need to be taken for further improvement.

Finally, school districts should undertake efforts to communicate effectively with parents and the community at large about the need for multiple indicators of school quality.

Performance assessment requires students to demonstrate what they know and can do by performing something complex, such as a science experiment or solving a multiple step mathematics problem or writing an essay. Ideally, an assessment system that combines multiple choice tests with performance measures and portfolios of student work and long term projects will tell us more about what students know and can do.

Although the state's 11th grade test does include some samples of writing and problem-solving activities, there are no New Jersey statewide initiatives such as those in Arizona, California, Connecticut, Kentucky and Vermont to implement performance measures.

Some work on performance assessment, however, is taking place in classrooms and districts around the state. At the classroom level, teachers have become involved in portfolio projects as an approach to documenting and evaluating work samples. In some districts, performance measures have become part of a districtwide assessment.

In South Brunswick, for example, data from traditional reading tests are being replaced with classroom performance samples of young children's reading and writing. Also in South Brunswick, a sixth grade "research performance assessment" has been developed that calls upon students to demonstrate higher order skills of investigating a problem and presenting the findings; a performance test in the arts at secondary levels is being pilot tested. [32]

The following guidelines ought to be employed in the development of an assessment system:

RECOMMENDATION

The current structure of educational testing in New Jersey should be modified to require standardized tests at grades 4, 8 and 11 only; a revised assessment system, keyed to curriculum frameworks and standards for all students, should indicate what body of knowledge students know and what skills they have and can use with that body of knowledge. Further, the state should assure that its accountability testing requirements are adjusted over time so that the best aspects of assessment methodology are incorporated into those requirements.

—use assessment as a means of formulating and communicating goals;

—emphasize staff participation and professional development in both the creation and use of assessment;

—accompany assessment with school-level action plans;

—provide the time and resources to develop a workable assessment system; and

—accompany the implementation of new assessment vehicles with constant monitoring and public reporting.

Report Card

Finally, the Department of Education must be responsible for reporting to the public the results of the efforts to measure what students know and can do. The Department has the authority and resources to gather the data necessary for effective accountability.

Report cards should contain student performance information and school information. The report card should seek to promote greater knowledge and understanding of the school learning environment and thereby encourage active participation by parents and community members. Wherever possible, comparative data should be provided.

Monitoring Of Schools

Efforts are underway to move the state toward a monitoring system that accommodates the view that improved student performance outcomes and effective school site management are the keys to the success of public education.

In January 1991, legislation established a Task Force on Educational Assessment and Monitoring. The task force is charged with making "recommendations for a uniform, statewide system for evaluating the performance of each school which shall be based upon State performance standards which will enable local boards of education to establish particular educational goals, learning objectives and performance standards and which will insure the implementation of these goals, objectives and standards with the maximum of local governance and management and the minimum of paperwork and unnecessary procedural requirements." [33]

A statement of Philosophy and Purpose drafted by the members of the task force calls for "establishing a collaborative working relationship between the State Department of Education and local districts resulting in a wholesome, effective and efficient system of evaluation and monitoring which has a primary focus of improving schools and fostering high

A quality education means a total education. Education is not only facts and figures, but also a preparation for dealing with a changing world that becomes more complex every day. If we are to survive in a world such as this, we must be educated more widely in futuristic thinking. When we are made aware of different options to us, then we will be truly successful and able to live in harmony with ourselves and others.

JOHN GUNIA

GARFIELD HIGH SCHOOL
BERGEN COUNTY

RECOMMENDATION

To create greater public accountability in all schools, the state should develop and implement an annual report card with accurate and timely data on individual school and local district performance. The report card should include data on academic achievement, staffing, costs, attendance rates and other relevant measures of school achievement.†

student achievement and growth while promoting maximum local governance and management."

The task force anticipates a report with recommendations in January 1992. An interim report, dated September 4, cites 14 principles as guidelines for the recommendations that will emphasize a "broad-based comprehensive assessment of student performance using multiple measures and indicators and district accountability that is coupled with a focus on individual school improvement in grades K-12."

Focusing on those elements of school reform that lead to effective schools and high quality performance from students may mean also that "New Jersey should eliminate from certification criteria, and from the monitoring process, elements which are insufficiently related to educational program quality or which can be handled better by separate and independent examination. Health and safety standards...and facilities standards also should be removed from the certification process.

"The monitoring process also should seek answers to questions about the degree to which staff, parents, community representatives (and students, where appropriate) are involved in efforts to examine problems and deficiencies, review potential solutions, design and implement appropriate local programs and strategies and whether adequate resources and authority in support of collaborative school site management and planning have been provided by the school district. Finally, monitoring should seek to determine if each school's program and staff are organized and coordinated in a manner that identifies and effectively addresses the full range of student needs and abilities." "

ASSESSING PERFORMANCE: PORTFOLIOS OF PROGRESS

The activities are challenging. They require students to observe, to analyze, to communicate, to calculate, to act and to self-assess. Tenth and eleventh graders may write essays and draw diagrams that explain why airplanes fly. Or, they could be asked to prove a mathematical theorem or to conduct a scientific experiment. In one exercise, groups of sixth graders design a classroom facility that satisfies space, capacity, and storage requirements while staying within a $3,500 budget. In another, they put on a skit to demonstrate their knowledge of applied arts and their ability to cooperate.

Student performance assessment in South Brunswick Township, a far cry from traditional standardized testing, is a response to a growing expectation that students know how to conceptualize, deduce, make assumptions, pose questions and solve problems — in short, to apply what they learn.

Learning is a complex process, and assessment must reflect that complexity by including a range of performance measures wider than the narrow glimpse provided by multiple-choice tests.

"You can teach students all the scales, but you won't know if they can play the piano until you sit them down at piano," says Willa Spicer, director of curriculum, South Brunswick Board of Education. "We want good, solid information on how our children are doing, based on our expectations of what they should be doing."

As yet, there are no statewide efforts in New Jersey to broaden performance assessment. The 11th-grade High School Proficiency Test, which debuts in the 1993-94 school year, does represent a step in that direction by calling for samples of writing and problem-solving.

South Brunswick wants to establish broader assessment measures through all elementary and high school grades.

In grades K through 2, samples of students' classroom reading and writing performance and teacher observations of progress are replacing traditional test data.

"It make little sense to standardize at this stage," Spicer comments. "These kids start off on different levels; they develop in surges; and they plateau at different times. We may aggregate the data for decision making purposes, but we rely only on individual portfolios to assess a young child's performance and progress."

Before they enter middle school, sixth-graders are assigned a social question to be answered through 10 hours of research. Their presentation — with visuals — is evaluated by an impartial panel usually comprising not only retired teachers but also representatives of the business community, where the ultimate test of knowledge occurs.

Experts agree that performance assessment is most successful if it involves teachers and students in all phases — from design to execution to interpretation of results. That way, students monitor their learning progress as teachers assess where more instructional effort may be needed.

In South Brunswick, students approaching high school graduation compile portfolios of what they consider to be their best work in each class during sophomore and junior years. They are asked to justify their selections.

"Self-assessment will be critical in the 1990s," Spicer says. "If students have no idea how good their work is, they're at the mercy of a single adult, whether it be a teacher or a supervisor at work.

"We've been doing a great job educating students for an agricultural or a factory society. The trouble is, we're becoming a nation of knowledge workers, and as such, we must teach students to solve complex problems, not simply to seek approval."

Reeds Road School in Absecon

Wm. Jesse Schloesser

Ted Lai

Duane Lee

Melissa Brewer

Domanithe Brooks

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The goal for any public education financing system is to ensure that elementary and secondary education is provided in an adequate and equitable manner for all students. The question is how the terms adequate and equitable are defined.

Abbott v. Burke

In June 1990, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled in Abbott v. Burke that the state's system for financing public elementary and secondary education, as it applied to the poorer urban school districts, failed to meet the constitutional mandate of a "thorough and efficient" education and therefore was unconstitutional.

The Court, having no programmatic basis upon which to define a thorough and efficient education, relied upon the programs and expenditures in the wealthier districts as the standard of adequacy and the measurement of equity. The Court ruled that the state must assure in the poorer urban districts, that per pupil expenditures for basic instructional programs or "regular education" are "substantially equal" to such expenditures in the wealthier districts, and also must assure that the level of funding in these poorer urban districts is adequate to redress their extreme disadvantages. The Court ruled that funding in the poorer urban districts must be certain every year and cannot be dependent upon a local district's ability to tax, given its limited property tax base and other essential services funded from that source.

Quality Education Act

Signed into law in July 1990, and amended in March 1991, the Quality Education Act provides a new system for financing education in the state:

1. A guaranteed funding level or foundation amount has been established that the state considers sufficient to pay for the cost of an education for a student.

2. Each district's capacity to support that level of funding for its students is based on both the district's property wealth and the personal income of its residents. The difference between the foundation amount required for all students and the local revenue capacity becomes the basis for calculating state foundation aid.

3. State funds also are provided to school districts for specific needs or program purposes in the form of categorical aid that includes special education, transportation, bilingual and at-risk aid. Categorical aid is allocated on an eligible-per-pupil basis without regard to the fiscal capacity of the district.

4. To phase in the impact of the Act, state transition aid is provided to ensure that no district receives less than 6.5 percent more total state aid in 1991-92 than it received in the previous year. Transition aid is phased out by 1995-96.

5. Pension and social security costs for local district employees are reimbursed through state pension and social security aid that compensates for 100 percent of these costs. Beginning in 1993-94, however, state aid for such costs will become part of foundation aid.

6. Annual growth, both in total state aid and in each district's budget, is limited to growth in per capita income in the state.

Guiding Principles

There are several principles that should guide any system for financing education in New Jersey:

1) Any financing system should be based

It is safe to assume that everyone is entitled to an equal education simply because everyone is capable of learning. The educational system in New Jersey unfortunately doesn't provide this for all of its students. To obtain these for all, students need adequate school buildings, books, and most importantly teachers. Qualified teachers are an absolute must in order for children to become positive and learned adults. Students also need encouragement from peers and the adults around them. With these key points hopefully, New Jersey's children will have the well deserved opportunity to express themselves and grow in a positive atmosphere.

JENNIFER G. BELL

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It is the right of all persons, regardless of race, economic status or health, to be given the same opportunity to learn through public education. This right cannot be denied, and as a government for the people, it is the duty of the government to assure this right. By making all schools equal, we are not denying the education of some for the sake of others. Rather, we are guaranteeing the right to an education and assuring that factors such as race, economic status, and health do not predetermine the fate of persons in less fortunate environments. It is the duty of the government to provide the opportunity for a sound education regardless of these factors.

JEANNIE KIM

upon student performance outcomes, linking those outcomes with effective programs and determining the cost of those educational programs. Funding should be sufficient to pay for the costs of those programs.

2) A foundation-aid funding system is an appropriate mechanism for financing education because it "guarantees that every student's education is supported by an equal amount of money, or foundation, regardless of the fiscal capacity of the individual district." [95]

3) The concept of affordability should be incorporated in any financing system and has applicability to both state and local revenues. Growth in such revenues should recognize the state's economy and the competing needs of other essential public services and programs. Annual growth, therefore, should be linked to an appropriate measure of revenue growth.

4) Over time, the majority of all state education aid should be wealth equalized to ensure equity.

5) New monies provided through state aid should fund specific programs, facilities and initiatives necessary to provide a thorough and efficient education.

Providing A Thorough And Efficient Education

The state must identify the strategies that work to produce high levels of student achievement, determine the cost of those strategies, and incorporate those funding requirements in its guaranteed foundation aid program. "The new system would link educational and fiscal systems. It would be an education goals, student achievement driven system with a finance structure designed to finance the programs and strategies required to meet the goals." [96]

A financing system that is based upon student performance outcomes and programs to achieve those outcomes ensures that funding is linked to high performance standards for all children in all schools. In addition, such a system is based upon defining a quality education as one in which students achieve certain competencies in specific areas: mathematics, science, history, geography, English, foreign languages, vocational education and the arts. Such a financing system also incorporates the costs of strategies to achieve those outcomes. Those strategies include not only instructional programs but also non-traditional school programs such as early childhood or preschool programs, extended-day kindergarten and integrated children's services.

Finally, such a financing system is an important step in establishing conditions for genuine accountability. If schools have goals, curriculum frameworks, a clearly articulated assessment system, adequate resources and the authority to determine how those resources are used to get

RECOMMENDATION

New Jersey's school funding system should be linked specifically to the costs of programs and services required to meet student performance goals. The same highly effective programs should be available to all students in New Jersey. Priority should be given to identifying the costs for those programs that will produce high academic outcomes for children in the special needs districts and other disadvantaged students.

The Costley Middle School in East Orange

left to right ► Shakeena King

Tawanda Williams

Carl Davis

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A quality education to me is a caring, outgoing and intelligent teacher provided to every student in every class in every grade in an environment suitable for learning. It is a meal for every needy student, and afterschool help for every needing student. A quality education means giving every single student a chance to strive to be the best.

MICHAEL LALAN

students to meet these goals, they legitimately can be held accountable.

Compliance With Abbott v. Burke

We must move toward expeditious implementation of the strategies outlined above for a thorough and efficient education based upon outcome measures. In the interim, compliance with the Court's decision with regard to per pupil expenditures is necessary to achieve a thorough and efficient education for the children in the special needs districts.

QEA provides a framework for the state to comply with the Court's mandate by 1995-96. Specifically, the flexibility of the Act's provisions regarding both equity budget caps and the foundation weighting factor specific to the special needs districts provides the state with a mechanism to achieve parity in per pupil expenditures for regular education between the special needs and wealthier suburban districts by 1995-96. However, the Act only permits adjustments to the weighting factor in 1993-94 and 1995-96. The longer the delay in adjusting that variable, the larger, and therefore more costly, those adjustments must be. The Act should be amended, therefore, to permit adjustments in the foundation weighting factor for special needs districts on an annual basis.

Of major concern are the costs involved in achieving parity and the implications those costs have upon the financing of the education system generally. In 1991-92, the average per pupil expenditure for regular education in the wealthier districts is estimated to be $7,826. To achieve parity immediately between the 30 special needs districts and these districts would cost approximately $370 million or $580 million in additional funds, depending upon whether "substantially equal" is defined as 90 percent or 100 percent of the average expenditures in the wealthier districts.

To achieve parity by 1995-96, the total additional costs required over the next four years, assuming the wealthier districts' budgets grow at an annual rate ranging from 3.8 percent to 5.6 percent, would range from $730 million to $980 million, with the amount depending on how parity is defined.

To comply with the Supreme Court's decision, the state must either provide additional state aid, shift funds from other districts and programs, find efficiencies within the existing system or do some combination of these.

New Program Initiatives

Beyond the costs of complying with Abbott v. Burke, the implementation of the new programs we have recommended will place further demands on existing resources. The costs of these programs, however, for at least the special needs districts, can be offset partially by the infusion of new monies that will be provided by QEA to comply with the Court's ruling.

For example, annual funding of a teacher professional development program in the amount of $100 per pupil would result in an annual increased expenditure of approximately $110 million.

A high quality early childhood program for disadvantaged three and four year olds would cost approximately $200-250 million of state and local revenues after using available federal funds. Implementation of coordinated social services programs for all students in special needs districts would cost approximately $125 million annually. The actual new annual expenditures required for such programs, however, are uncertain because some level of funding may be captured from existing federal programs.

The first phase of a state school building program would require $1 billion of bonds issued over a four-year period. Annual debt service payments would cost approximately $80 million each year for 20-25 years, with the actual amount dependent upon how and when bonds are structured and issued.

Finally, the cost estimates for an increase in

the length of the school day and year need to be considered.

These cost estimates are preliminary and should be reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget within the New Jersey Department of the Treasury.

Cost Control, Management And Efficiencies

New Jersey, by any measure, spends a substantial amount of money on public education. In the 1991-92 school year, total education revenues are estimated to be almost $10.4 billion and represent per pupil revenues of more than $9,400, one of the highest of any state in the nation.

Over the last 10 years, a period of overall decline in student enrollment, per pupil revenues increased 139 percent or $5.7 billion, while the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased 60 percent.

The ability of the state's economy to sustain revenue growth of this magnitude is unrealistic. Furthermore, student enrollment has begun to rise and is estimated to increase almost 30 percent or more than 310,000 students through the end of this decade.

These factors necessitate that the state and local districts employ new as well as existing methodologies to control costs and rethink how resources are employed. Areas for immediate consideration include: budget caps, school consolidation, health plan and pension benefits, teachers' salaries, business functions and special education costs.

Budget Caps

Budget caps were established to limit the annual growth in local property taxes, control the overall increase in school spending and promote cost effectiveness. In addition, caps for the wealthier districts can help to limit the disparity in per pupil expenditures between the special needs and wealthier districts which drives the cost of complying with the Supreme Court decision. There is concern, however, that budget caps may reduce or eliminate exceptional educational programs found in the wealthier districts.

Under QEA, a district's budget cap is a percent limitation on yearly increases in the district's expenditures. These expenditures include costs for regular education and state-mandated categorical programs such as special education. Historically, the costs of categorical programs have increased at higher rates than regular education. The budget cap process, coupled with these rapidly rising costs, limits the amount of money available for regular education. For these reasons, budget caps should be retained but categorical aid should be excluded from them.

Existing law requires that the budgets of most districts must be submitted for voter approval. This procedure should be required only if a district's proposed budget exceeds the expenditure level permitted under the district's budget cap.

School Consolidation

There are more than 400 school districts with enrollments of fewer than 2,500 students. If these districts were to consolidate into K-12 districts, the estimated savings would be approximately $150 million. This estimate assumes that in each district between one third and one half of central office costs can be saved, depending on the type of district, and that 50 percent of the districts could take advantage of building closings or avoiding new construction.

Health Plan and Pension Benefits

A thorough review of the current system of medical, health plan and pension benefits should be undertaken and policy changes formulated within the context of benefit programs in the private sector. Specifically, the Governor's Management Review Commission (GMRC) has made a series of recommendations that should

Quality education has less to do with money (although that is a part of it), and more to do with helping people realize that school isn't just something to do before getting to real life but that school is just as much real life as anything that will ever come after it. Otherwise, despite passing grades, a lot of people won't be getting much of an education at all.

J. PIA FRANCISCO

Erica Sanchez

Christopher Oliveira

Carmen Rios

Luis Santiago

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be reviewed closely. With respect to health plan changes, the GMRC recommended that participants contribute to the funding (pension costs), deductibles and maximum out of pocket costs be increased and hospital precertification be mandatory. The GMRC also addressed potential areas for cost control in the state's pension plan that include: increasing early and normal retirement age; redefining the salary computations upon which benefits are based; revising the interest rate available on participant loans; modifying the asset mix on a more flexible basis; and retaining outside managers for investing portions of the portfolio. Depending upon the recommendations implemented, a significant reduction in health plan and pension costs could be realized.

Finally, the last audit of State pension fund assets, dated June 30, 1990, indicated the market value of such assets exceeded the book value by more than $2.3 billion. If some portion of the excess in market value were recognized over time, future pension contributions could be reduced by a significant amount, thus potentially increasing the amount of money available for foundation aid in support of school programs.

Teachers' Salaries

A policy to increase teachers' salaries, begun in the 1980's, resulted in an overall increase of 110 percent between 1980 and 1990. By 1990-91, the average salary was $38,411. During the last two years, average teachers' salaries have continued to rise and at a rate exceeding the Consumer Price Index (CPI). In 1989-90, the average teacher's salary increased 8.0 percent, while the CPI grew by 5.6 percent. In 1990-91, the comparable numbers were 7.6 percent and 6.0 percent. Average increases in teachers salaries are less than the actual salary increases for teachers individually, because of teacher retirements and those people who are replaced by teachers at a lower salary scale. If the average increase in teachers' salaries over just the last two years were held to the increase in the CPI only, more than $114 million in salary expenses would have been saved in addition to savings in pension costs. Consideration should be given to using any increase in average teachers' salaries above the CPI to compensate teachers for expanding the school day/year.

Business Functions

Non-educational business functions such as purchasing and transportation expenses might be consolidated so that each local district would be free to focus its resources solely on educational programs. Incentives for school districts that can identify and implement savings initiatives should be made available on a regular basis. Where possible, contracts with independent agencies that might be able to provide services more economically and efficiently must be encouraged.

Special Education Costs

Finally, we are aware of the growing costs for special education. The Plan to Revise Special Education (P2R) should be implemented statewide with careful attention to the concerns of teachers, parents and professional organizations. P2R, in combination with the early childhood and integrated social services programs recommended earlier in this report, could have a positive effect on controlling costs for special education.

While recognizing that local districts bear responsibility for the cost of special education day programs, the Department of Education should develop a plan for the state assumption of the living expenses of handicapped students who are placed in residential settings. The model used by the Division of Youth and Family Services could be used to provide guidelines for the plan as appropriate.

Other Funding Issues: At-Risk Aid

QEA replaced the former compensatory education program with an at-risk program that distributes funds on the basis of a poverty index. There is no "best" design for distributing dollars for programs earmarked to assist low income students who are achieving below acceptable levels. Economic-based programs channel relatively more funds into low-income and rural districts. Achievement-based programs channel funds into all districts because every district has some students achieving below acceptable levels.

Under QEA, the amount of at-risk aid received by a district in 1991-92 and 1992-93 is the greater of the amount calculated under the new at-risk aid formula or the amount of compensatory education aid received by the district in 1990-91. This approach provides additional funds for the special needs districts but does so in a way that does not take funds away from other districts that have programs that serve low achieving students.

Both the at-risk and compensatory education aid formulas should be retained in determining the amount of at-risk aid that a district receives. The amount of such aid should be calculated using each formula, and the district should receive the greater of the two amounts. Appropriate data collection systems for both formulas should be implemented annually so that accurate aid estimates can be calculated under both formulas.

As noted earlier, at-risk aid, as categorical aid, should be removed from a district's overall budget cap. Finally, at-risk aid should be linked to discrete programs and initiatives necessary to achieve a thorough and efficient education.

Other Funding Issues: Pension And Social Security Costs

QEA made pension and social security costs the responsibility of local districts and shifted approximately $940 million of state costs to local school districts. The intent was to include these costs as a component of the guaranteed foundation amount upon which state aid to a local district is determined. Monies were to be shifted

A quality education is one which teaches the student to think both deeply and creatively, to weigh all sides of an issue before making a decision, to consider a situation from the point of view of the participants rather than his or her own, to effectively draw and defend conclusions, to account for the influence of emotions on events of all kinds, to integrate individual pieces of information to a cohesive and coherent whole, and to perceive the patterns and cycles in which all things move. It should provide a strong basis of factual information for further growth, but it should concentrate more on critical thinking than rote memorization. The most important characteristic of a quality education, however, is that it instill a strong desire for discovery and intellectual growth beyond that which is formally taught. In short, a quality education cultivates eager minds which are sharp, yet open.

RYAN CAVENEY

MILLBURN HIGH SCHOOL
ESSEX COUNTY

RECOMMENDATION

The Legislature should amend the Quality Education Act to provide for 100% payment of all pension and social security costs by the state.†

from state pension payments to state foundation aid.

For property poor districts, such a shift in costs initially would result in a financial gain, because the increase in their foundation aid would more than compensate for the increased costs. For middle income districts, the shift in costs would result initially in almost a "wash," because the increase in their foundation and/or transition aid would compensate for more than 90 percent of the increased costs. Such a shift would add new costs immediately to property wealthy districts that receive little or no foundation aid or transition aid. Once transition aid is phased out, only districts that receive foundation aid would have any portion of these costs compensated by state aid.

In response to concerns raised about the potential effects of the transfer of responsibility for paying pension and social security costs, the Act was amended to delay implementation of this provision for two years until 1993-94, so that the commission could review the issue.

There are several arguments for shifting these costs to local districts. Pension and social security costs are a major component of personnel costs. Local districts should bear the total fiscal implications of any personnel decisions to provide discipline and ensure efficiency in allocating such resources. In addition, the state funds used to pay for social security and pension costs are a major source of existing revenues to reduce the disparity in per pupil spending between poor and wealthy districts as required by Abbott v. Burke. By shifting such costs to local districts and incorporating those costs in the foundation aid system, almost $1 billion of additional state funds would be distributed among districts on a wealth equalized basis.

The major arguments for the state's continuing to pay these costs include the fact that all decisions regarding pension and social security benefits historically have been determined solely by the state, which should bear the fiscal implications of those decisions. In addition, by shifting those costs to local districts, any incentive to develop a less costly benefits plan that is more consistent with other public and private plans would be lost.

Finally, the quality of educational programs in the wealthy districts should not be diminished. Shifting responsibility for paying pension and social security costs to local districts, coupled with the district budget caps and the phased elimination of transition aid, may place significant fiscal pressure on districts that receive no foundation aid and force substantial program reductions.

Among commission members, there was a wide range in viewpoints regarding how pension and social security costs should be paid, although there was little support for shifting all such costs to the local districts. Efforts to develop consensus on a compromise solution that would require both the state and the local districts to pay a portion of the costs—for example, the local districts pay social security and the state pay pension costs—were unsuccessful.

We have proposed a new definition of a quality education that contains clearly defined, high performance goals for all the students in all of New Jersey's public schools. The ultimate measure of whether this definition has any more meaning than others that have been tried and found wanting will be demonstrated improvements in student outcomes by all those students in all those schools.

We must embark on a program to awaken public awareness to the potential benefits of renewed commitment to public education, for our students and our state. That program must be far-reaching and must include every segment of the population: parents, taxpayers, members of the education and business communities, elected officials and students around the state. It must focus on, and be committed to, improvements every year, in every grade, in every school.

The public awareness program must be aimed at those who don't know that there are problems in education, those who don't understand the seriousness of the problems and those who feel the problems aren't theirs.

This report should be viewed as a beginning. It should be circulated widely and form the basis for meetings around the state for discussion, the development of action plans, and, where necessary and appropriate, modifications.

To garner the broadest possible public understanding and support of these recommendations, it is essential that the key messages be brought to as many stakeholder groups as possible. The Quality Education Commission (QEC) should reach out not only to those who are knowledgeable about the issues facing education in New Jersey, but to those who may deny problems exist.

A critical role must be played by the education community in New Jersey. The QEC report and recommendations should be presented to education groups, including but not limited to, the New Jersey School Boards Association, the organization of school business officials (NJASBO), the principals and superintendents associations (NJPSA and NJASA), teacher organizations such as the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the New Jersey PTA and the New Jersey Associations for Public Schools at their regular conventions or at specially convened meetings soon after the report is available. These presentations should seek to elicit specific action plans from each of these constituent groups about implementing the recommendations in the report.

The New Jersey business community has for some time been an active partner in improving educational outcomes. Businesses around the state have been providing assistance to school districts, students and teachers in an effort to contribute skilled, professional expertise to the common cause of public education. Efforts such as those undertaken by individual corporations in New Jersey such as Johnson & Johnson, PSE&G, Schering-Plough, Merck, The Prudential, AT&T and Warner-Lambert, to name a few, should be encouraged. Descriptive material about these programs should be made available for other schools and businesses to study and use, where appropriate, to assist their own plans.

We need to build on these initiatives that have had a degree of success. In addition, statewide business groups such as the New Jersey Business and Industry Association, the State Chamber of Commerce and the Partnership for New Jersey should be asked to host local meet-

In my opinion, quality education involves learning by doing. Experience is the best teacher. Hands-on learning provides this type of education, and in my opinion, New Jersey needs more of this. Not field trips, necessarily, but open times for discussion with people outside of school during school hours, would definitely improve the quality of education in our state and nation.

JAY PACCAPANICCIA

OLER TAPE MAY
REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
TAPE MAY COUNTY

SCHOOLS + BUSINESSES = EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Atlantic City's education and business communities are leading a quest to make its 11 public schools the best anywhere. That quest began with a partnership, formed in 1987, between the Sands Hotel & Casino and Atlantic City High School. Later, these two were joined by Stockton State College. Following the successful lead of the Sands and Stockton, 14 businesses joined forces with the city's other 10 public schools this past April. This makes the city the only one in the country where every public school has been "adopted."

The school-casino partnership began modestly with a new and improved sports banquet. From there, the partnership took off. As many see it, the partnership's greatest effort is its Go On and Learn (GOAL) program, which started in spring 1990 with the help of Stockton's Dr. Vera King Farris.

Under the program, selected high school seniors attend college classes at Stockton two nights a week for a semester. High School Assistant Principal Bob Previti explains, "Students are provided an opportunity to attend classes they may have thought they never could handle." The school district purchases the books, and the Sands provides the buses. There's no cost to the students. Of the 26 students who finished the program in spring 1990, 22 applied to college, Previti reports.

Another project, the Independent Science Research Program, provides buses for students to visit the National Institute of Health in Maryland and the Cornell University Medical College in New York. At these visits, students tour facilities, perform experiments and discuss career opportunities.

Also, the Sands has conducted summer hire, internship and career placement programs. And, student tours of Sands facilities, such as art students visiting the print shop and French students touring hotel and restaurant facilities, are routine. Recently, theater students served as extras and observed the shooting of a television commercial. The Sands has sponsored performances by the Princeton Ballet to raise monies for scholarships and has hosted National Honor Society and Model United Nations Awards banquets, student fashion shows, art teachers' exhibits and school club luncheons.

Superintendent of Schools Paul Lacity says the district and its partners focus on joint efforts that are "of quality and student-oriented."

"The young people in Atlantic City get insights into one of the major industries in town. They come to see casinos as more than places where people come to gamble. They realize that people also make their careers there," says Sands President Brad Stone.

Stone also points out, that at the same time, Sands employees, some of whom have children attending Atlantic City schools, "feel good about the role our casino plays in the community."

Under a partnership of a different form, eight members of the chamber of commerce are serving on several board of education committees, including curriculum/instruction and buildings/grounds. Frank Soltys of Ceasars already has provided free technical assistance to the board as it reviewed proposals for its new high school, which is slated for completion in September 1994. According to Alfred Cade, Caesars senior vice president and Chamber vice president of community development, Soltys' expertise has saved the project much money. Cade sees the chamber-board partnership as one in which business leaders act as a catalyst. "We're encouraging school leaders to ask themselves, 'Are ours the best schools on the planet?'," he says. "And, with our business expertise, we're helping the board to execute its responsibilities to its schools as it defines them."

Chief among the benefits to business of the partnerships are bright and productive future employees, Cade finds.

Lacity says every school district has the opportunity to partner. He attributes the success of Atlantic City's program to good planning, careful needs assessment, a sharing of each partner's expectations and close coordination and communication between a dedicated individual at each business and each school.

He wholeheartedly believes partnerships make a difference in the quality of life for students.

ings to provide forums for discussion and to solicit input on how to achieve the educational goals described in the report.

Several initiatives are underway already that should result in reinforcing the ideas and recommendations that can lead to better student performance and better performing schools.

The New Jersey Business Roundtable (BRT), a consortium of nine New Jersey businesses, has undertaken a project to determine the status of the state's efforts in many of the key areas discussed in this report. The BRT initiative will focus on New Jersey's preparedness in the "essential components of a successful education system."

When the report has been completed, BRT member companies will develop action plans to build on those strengths articulated in the study and develop initiatives to address problem or weak areas.

In another area, the Governor's Management Review Commission (GMRC) has undertaken evaluative studies of several departments, among them the Department of Education. The GMRC report, in particular, should be used in conjunction with the QEC recommendations to provide guidelines for the effective reorganization of the Department of Education.

The New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission has recommended a plan to "increase the skill level, the adaptability to change and the competitiveness of the State's workers and employers." Its recommendations for "a workforce readiness system" include a comprehensive career education program integrated into the school curriculum beginning at the elementary level.

The plan seeks to link school and work through involving all "levels of the educational process: elementary, secondary, postsecondary, vocational/technical and two-year and four-year colleges and universities. The job requirements of a globally competitive economy demand that the training of workers be a continuous process." [57]

In addition to these efforts, we recommend a full-scale communications initiative to enlist support for public education.

Regional information meetings hosted by groups such as the League of Women Voters, PTAs, ASPIRA, the New Jersey Alliance of Black School Educators, the NAACP, and education/child advocacy groups and local boards of education should be convened throughout the state. These meetings should be attended/chaired by QEC commission members who invite local communities to present their views on implementing the recommendations.

Specific subject areas in the report also should form the bases for community meetings for discussion. Sessions could combine a presentation by a QEC commission member and/or subject matter expert with an open public discussion.

The QEC co-chairs should develop plans to meet with the leadership of both houses of New Jersey's legislature to underscore the importance of their roles in implementing the recommendations in the report.

Visits should be made to the editorial boards of major newspapers to review report recommendations and seek support and consensus, where possible.

In all of these efforts, the emphasis should be on development of action plans to improve the education of our children. We need to begin now and we need to do it with the participation and endorsement of all major stakeholders in the education process. We need to change the status quo and encourage innovation and accountability.

As outlined, the plan to make the education of all our children a priority will need the continued support of those who have traditionally been involved in the development of educational goals. Clearly, it also will require the active participation of everyone around the state who stands to benefit from an improved educational system.

The members of the Quality Education Commission recognize their responsibilities to contribute to a sustained effort to make public education a priority in New Jersey. After a review of the progress of these public awareness and implementation plans in 1992, the QEC will make a recommendation to the Governor in the third quarter of 1992 regarding whether to establish a permanent organization to succeed the QEC beyond 1992.

Providing an equitable, quality education for all New Jersey's students will not be easy. It will take commitment: a commitment to changing patterns of behavior that have existed for more than a 100 years; a commitment to demanding equity and quality; and a commitment to doing things better because we know we can, because we know we must—for all our children.

All of New Jersey's children are entitled to a quality education, regardless of their social, economic or racial background. A quality education is one in which a student is pushed to the limits of his or her potential and learns the basic skills necessary to become a productive citizen later in life. Some students may have higher aspirations of college and graduate school. A quality education in New Jersey would prepare these students for any institution of higher education. Three basic things are essential for a quality education: community support, adequate funds for a budget, and qualified teachers. Without these things, New Jersey's future is in jeopardy.

CRYSTAL LAWS

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6. Abbott v. Burke, pp. 363-64.

7. Robert Peterkin, Superintendent, Milwaukee (Wisconsin) Schools, in testimony before the Quality Education Commission on February 20, 1991.

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9. Professor Linda Darling-Hammond, Columbia University Teachers College, in written testimony prepared for the Quality Education Commission, April 17, 1991, p.2.

10. Chester E. Finn, *We Must Take Charge* (New York, The Free Press, 1991), p. 251.

11. Michael Cohen, Director, National Alliance for Restructuring Education, in written testimony prepared for the Quality Education Commission on April 17, 1991, p. 3.

12. The language and information on multiculturalism are taken largely from written testimony prepared for the Quality Education Commission by Janette Colon Jorge, Teacher, Newark Public Schools, in written testimony prepared for the Quality Education Commission on March 22, 1991.

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31. "Redefining the State's Role in Education," Recommendations of the New Jersey Business and Industry Association to the Quality Education Commission, October 21, 1991, p. 3.

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JANUARY-JULY 1991

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I. BACKGROUND

The goal for any educational financing system is to ensure that public elementary and secondary education is provided in an adequate and equitable manner for all students. The question then becomes what is adequate, what is equitable, and how do we measure those terms, based upon outcomes, programs, or expenditures?

In addressing these questions, the Commission has focused its attention upon the allocation of funds, not upon the method for generating such revenues.

New Jersey, by any measure, spends a vast amount of money on public education. In the 1991-92 school year, total revenues were estimated to be almost $10.4 billion. The amount represents a per pupil revenue of about $9,400 which is among the highest of any state in the nation. Yet this overall high revenue level conceals wide disparities in per pupil expenditures across school districts in the State.

II. THE COURT RULING

In June 1990, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled in Abbott v. Burke that the State's system of financing elementary and secondary education was unconstitutional as it applied to the State's poorer urban school districts, because neither a thorough nor an efficient education was being provided in these districts. Several aspects of the Court's decision are important to consider. The Court noted that:

- It was given no programmatic basis upon which to make a ruling. Therefore, the Court used expenditures as the basis for measuring a thorough and efficient education and the programs in the wealthier districts as the standard.
- Funding alone will not achieve the Constitutional mandate of a thorough and efficient education in the poorer urban districts. Substantial educational reform is required for success; without it, the money may accomplish nothing.
- As long as a thorough and efficient education is provided in the poorer urban districts, funding disparities may exist.

The major provisions of the Court decision include the following:

(1) With regard to the funding of education in the poorer urban districts, the State must assure that:

(a) per pupil expenditures for basic instructional programs are substantially equal to such expenditures in the wealthier suburban districts;

(b) the level of funding in the poorer urban districts also is adequate to provide for their special education needs and redresses their extreme disadvantages; and

(c) such funding does not depend upon the ability of local districts to tax and is certain every year.

(2) Any state aid that is counter-equalizing, that increases funding disparities and that has no arguable educational or administrative justification, is unconstitutional.

(3) The new funding mechanism must take effect in school year 1991-92, but may be phased in over time.

III. MAJOR PROVISIONS OF THE QUALITY EDUCATION ACT

In July 1990, the Quality Education Act (QEA) was signed into law. The Act was intended to address the Court's ruling by increasing income taxes and allocating a substantial amount of those new monies to the poorer urban school districts through a new financing system. In March 1991, the Act was amended to reallocate a large portion of those new monies to middle-income and wealthy districts for property tax relief.

The important features of QEA include the following:

(1) With QEA, the system for financing public education changed from a guaranteed tax base system to a foundation aid approach. Every student is now "guaranteed" a specified level of funding. This is in contrast to the prior financing system, called Chapter 212, that was designed to equalize every district's capacity to raise money but left the amount of district expenditures up to each district to decide.

(2) A guaranteed "foundation" amount is defined and constitutes the cost of providing a quality education for a student. The foundation amount varies depending upon a student's grade level and whether the student is enrolled in one of the poorer urban districts. Weighting factors are used to compensate for education costs that vary by grade level and to address the special needs of students in the poorer urban districts. A district's foundation budget is determined by multiplying the weighted foundation amounts by the student enrollment relevant to each foundation amount and totaling those amounts. Foundation aid is allocated among districts on a wealth-equalized basis which takes into consideration a district's property and income wealth.

(3) There also are four categorical aid programs to provide funds for specific needs or program purposes: special education aid, transportation aid, bilingual aid, and at-risk aid. These funds are in addition to the foundation amount for a student. The amount of aid is based upon weightings factors linked to the base foundation amount, with the exception of transportation aid with its own formula. Aid is allocated on an eligible per pupil basis without regard to the fiscal capacity of a district.

(4) Pension and social security costs for local school district employees are paid through pension and social security aid. Such State aid compensates for 100% of these costs through 1992-93. In 1993-94, these costs become the responsibility of local districts and will be included as a component of the guaranteed foundation amount. Therefore, beginning in 1993-94, aid for such costs will be allocated on a wealth-equalized basis.

(5) Transition aid is provided to any district that would not have received at least 6.5% more aid in 1991-92 than in 1990-91, to phase in the impact of the new law. Transition aid decreases annually at a rate of 25% per year, so that all transition aid is eliminated by 1995-96.

(6) The annual growth both in total State aid and in a local district's expenditures is tied to growth in the State per capita personal income (PCI) averaged over a four year period. District budget caps ranged from 7.5% to 9.0% in 1991-92.

(7) Under the statutory limits on total state aid, the full cost of pension and social security and categorical aid are deducted from the total statewide aid available, with the remainder allocated through the foundation aid formula.

(8) The provisions regarding local budget caps require that if categorical programs grow at a rate faster than the growth permitted under the district's budget cap, moneys spent for regular education must be reduced to keep total district spending within its budget cap.

(9) Several criteria are used to define "poorer urban districts." As a result, there are thirty such districts that are called "special needs districts."

(10) The deadline for meeting the Court's requirement of parity in per pupil expenditures between the special needs districts and the wealthy districts is defined as school year 1995-96.

IV. SCHOOL DISTRICT AID IN 1991-92

School year 1991-92 is the first year that New Jersey's public school districts have been financed according to the provisions of the Quality Education Act. Table one shows the amount of funds from state and local revenue sources and by type of aid for 1991-92 compared to the previous year. Chart A illustrates the components of state aid and local revenue. As these data indicate:

- In 1991-92, total school district aid from state and local revenues is estimated to exceed $9.8 billion, and represents an increase of 12% or nearly $1.1 billion in additional revenues from the previous year. If one eliminates from these figures the $229 million in district property tax relief produced by district budget caps, the increase is 9.7% or more than $850 million.
- Of the $9.8 billion, 55% was from local revenues and 45% from State aid.

SCHOOL DISTRICT AID *Dollars In Millions*
FROM STATE AND LOCAL REVENUES

Revenue Source	School Year		Change
	1990-91	1991-92	
State Aid			
Foundation Aid	$1,661	$2,060	$399
Categorical Aid	740	1,073	333
Pensions FICA Aid	881	940	59
Transition Aid	148	116	(32)
Other Aid	15	152	(3)
Subtotal	3,445	4,201	756
Other State Aid	196	255	59
Total State Aid	3,641	4,456	815
Local Revenues	5,133	5,398	265
TOTAL REVENUES	**$8,774**	**$9,854**	**$1,080**

- Wealth-equalized state school district aid as a percentage of total state school district aid remained relatively constant at 46% for 1990-91 and 1991-92.

With regard to the special needs districts, in 1991-92, these districts received $307 million in additional State aid. Of this amount, $214 million was for educational programs, $82 million for property tax relief, and $11 million for pensions and social security costs. In addition, of the $360 million appropriated in the Supplemental Property Tax Relief Act for municipal property tax relief, $109 million was allocated to the municipalities with boundaries coterminous with these districts. Chart B displays the allocation of total state aid between special needs and all other districts.

V. ESTIMATES OF FUTURE STATE AID AND LOCAL REVENUES FOR EDUCATION

Recent PCI estimates from the New Jersey Department of the Treasury indicate that the average growth rate in State aid for each of the next four years will not exceed 5.81% and will decline to as low as 5.94% in 1994-95. These percentages compare to annual increases ranging from 4% to 22% over the last ten years.

Based upon these estimates, annual increases in total State aid are projected to be $225-$255 million for each of the next four years, for an aggregate total increase of $945 million for the period.

With regard to district budget caps, based upon the PCI estimates, these caps will range from 5.8% to 6.8% over the next four years. Assuming the proportion of State aid to total revenues remains constant, local revenues are estimated to increase approximately $290 million in each of the next four years, for an aggregate total increase of $1.2 billion for the period. This amount would increase if the State's portion of total revenues decreases over time.

In summary, based upon QEA provisions and current estimates of PCI, total new monies from state and local sources are estimated to be $2.1 billion aggregated over the next four years.

VI. COST OF COMPLYING WITH COURT RULING

As noted in Section II of this paper, in Abbott v. Burke, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that the per pupil expenditure for basic instructional programs in the poorer urban districts must be "substantially equal" to such expenditures in the wealthier suburban districts.

In 1991-92, the average per pupil expenditure for such costs in the wealthier suburban districts is estimated to be $7,826. To achieve parity in 1991-92 would cost approximately $570 million or $580 million in additional funds, depending upon whether parity is defined as 90% or $100% of the average expenditures in the wealthier districts.

Chart C reflects the high, low, and average per pupil spending for the wealthier suburban districts as compared to the special needs districts.

If parity is to be achieved by 1995-96, the additional cost is estimated to range from $730 million to $980 million in new monies required over the next four years, with the amount again depending upon how "substantially equal" is defined. These estimates are based upon recent New Jersey Department of the Treasury estimates regarding State per capita personal income for the next four years and assume that the wealthier districts' budgets grow at no more than the minimum percentage permitted under the QEA.

The estimates discussed above reflect the cost of only dealing with the special needs districts. If other districts were considered in any solution, the costs would be substantially greater.

VII. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) The ideal way to ensure adequacy of educational programs would be to define "a thorough and efficient education," determine the cost of those program components, and then provide funds to finance such an education. This long- range solution will be achieved through the defining of goals and the development of curriculum standards to address those goals. The next step must be to determine the most cost-effective programs and strategies to achieve those goals, and then determine the total cost of providing a thorough and efficient education.

In the interim, the State must comply with the Court's decision regarding per pupil expenditures in the special needs districts in order to achieve a thorough and efficient education in those districts.

(2) The use of a foundation amount or guaranteed funding level is an appropriate basis upon which to develop a sound system for financing education in New Jersey. This approach defines adequacy in terms of per pupil expenditures for basic instructional programs and ensures equity through a wealth equalizing funding formula.

(3) Any new monies provided through State aid should link funds to specific programs identified by the Court as part of a thorough and efficient education.

(4) The concept of affordability should be incorporated in any financing system and has applicability to both State and local revenues. Growth in such revenues should recognize the State's economy and the competing needs of other essential public services and programs. Therefore, annual growth should be linked to an appropriate index of revenue growth. Furthermore, the concept of indexing is useful for all State programs. However, if it is not implemented for all such programs, then State aid for education is at a disadvantage.

(5) Budget caps for the wealthier local districts are necessary: (a) to control expenditure growth, and (b) to limit the disparity in per pupil expenditures between the special needs and wealthier districts which drives the cost of complying with the Court decision. However, such budget caps must be formulated so as not to level down education in those districts.

To help achieve this objective, categorical aid should be excluded from any district's budget cap. However, this may increase the growth in per pupil spending for regular education in the wealthier districts and thereby increase the cost of achieving parity in such expenditures between the special needs and wealthier districts.

(6) The flexibility of QEA's provisions regarding the equity budget caps and the foundation weighting factor specific to the special needs districts provides a mechanism for the State to achieve parity in per pupil expenditures between the special needs and wealthy suburban districts. However, the Act only permits adjustments to the weighting factor in 1993-94 and 1995-6. The longer the delay in adjusting those variables, the larger and more costly those adjustments must be. The Act should be amended to permit adjustments in the foundation weighting factor for special needs districts on an annual basis.

(7) The State must meet the requirements of the Abbott v. Burke decision. The task is figuring out what is "substantially equal" with regard to per pupil expenditures and achieving that goal, given the magnitude of the costs involved and the State's weak economy.

VIII. SOURCES OF REVENUES TO ADDRESS THE COURT RULING

To comply with the Court's decision by 1995-96, the State must either (a) provide additional State aid; (b) shift funds from other districts and programs; (c) find efficiencies within the existing system, or (d) do some combination of these.

With regard to new monies, $945 million in additional State aid automatically will become available over the next four years according to the provisions of QEA and current estimates on growth in the PCI. If such funds were used to address the per pupil spending disparity in the poorer urban districts, it would require freezing State aid for all other districts and all categorical programs.

Possible sources of monies from existing State aid include the following:

(a) Shift all or a portion of pension and social security costs to the local districts. The amount of monies made available for other uses will depend upon what costs are shifted and when the shift occurs, because of the impact on transition aid provided to the districts.

(b) With regard to categorical aid:
- (i) allocate categorical aid based upon the wealth of a district;
- (ii) reduce the amount of such aid for all or certain categorical programs; or
- (iii) incorporate bilingual and at-risk aid monies into foundation aid.

(c) Restructure municipal property tax relief to provide $251 million in additional funding. (Of the $360 million appropriated for this purpose, $109 million was previously allocated to the special needs districts.) This approach will require an increase in local property taxes to compensate for the diversion of these funds.

(d) With regard to transition aid, for each year from 1992-93 through 1994-95, an additional $29 million of funds usd in the prior year for transition aid will become available for other purposes.

(e) With regard to budget caps:
- (i) Eliminate such caps on the special needs districts to provide $82 million in additional funding. This approach will require an increase in local property taxes to compensate for the diversion of these funds.
- (ii) Maintain budget caps on the other districts and divert $147 million in property tax relief to provide additional funding. This approach also will require an increase in local property taxes to compensate for the diversion of these funds.

(f) Direct all of the Commissioner of Education's $25 million of discretionary fund monies to the special needs districts. This will provide an additional $6 million.

(g) The last audit of State pension fund assets, dated June 30, 1990, indicated the market value of such assets exceeded the book value by more than $2.3 billion. If some portion of the excess in market value were recognized over time, future pension contributions could be reduced by a significant amount, and the difference reallocated to other programs.

Possible efficiencies for the State to consider include the following:

(a) There are over 400 school districts with enrollments of less that 2,500 students. If these districts consolidated into K-12 school districts, the estimated savings would be at least $150 million. This estimate assumes that in each district 33%-50% of central office costs can be saved, depending upon the type of district, and that 50% of the districts could take advantage of building closing or avoidance of new construction.

(b) With regard to pension costs, the Governor's Management Review Committee has made a series of recommendations which should be reviewed closely. These include increasing early and normal retirement age; redefining salary computation upon which benefits are based; revising the interest rate available on participant loans; modifying asset mix on a more flexible basis; and retaining outside managers for investing portions of the portfolio. Depending upon the recommendations implemented, a significant reduction in pension costs could be realized.

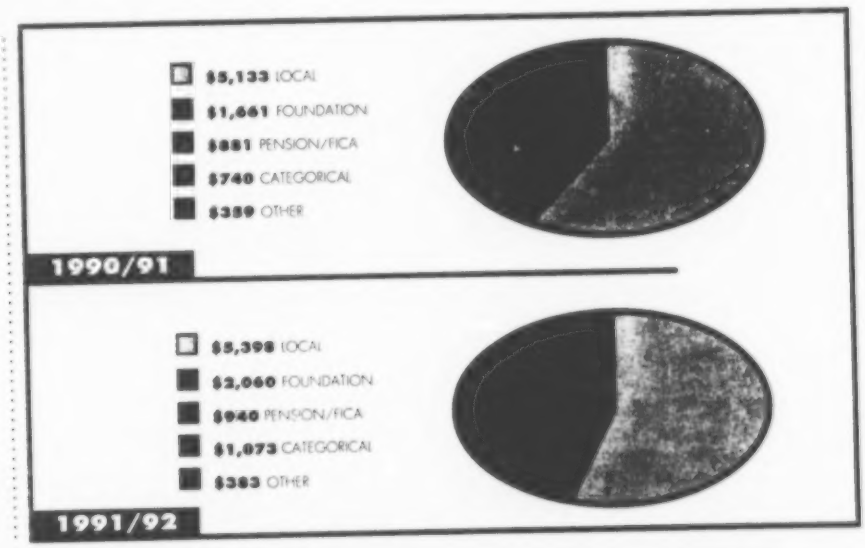
(c) A conscious policy was initiated in the 1980's to increase teachers' salaries. From 1980 to 1990, the average teacher's salary increased 110%. By 1990-91, the average salary was $38,411. During the last two years, average teacher salaries have continued to rise and at a rate exceeding the CPI. In 1989-90, the average teacher salary increased 8%, while the CPI grew by 5.6%. In 1990-91, the comparable figures were 7.7% and 6.0%. Average increases in teachers' salaries are less than the actual salary increases for teachers individually, because of teacher retirements and those people being replaced by teachers paid at a lower salary scale.

If the average increase in teachers' salaries over the last two years were the same as the CPI, over $114 million in salary expenses would have been saved in addition to savings in pension costs. Consideration should be given to using any increase in average teachers' salaries above the CPI to compensating teachers for extending the school day and/or year.

CHART A

School District Aid

From State and Local Revenues



Source
State of NJ Budget
Fiscal Year 1991-92
and NJ Department of Education

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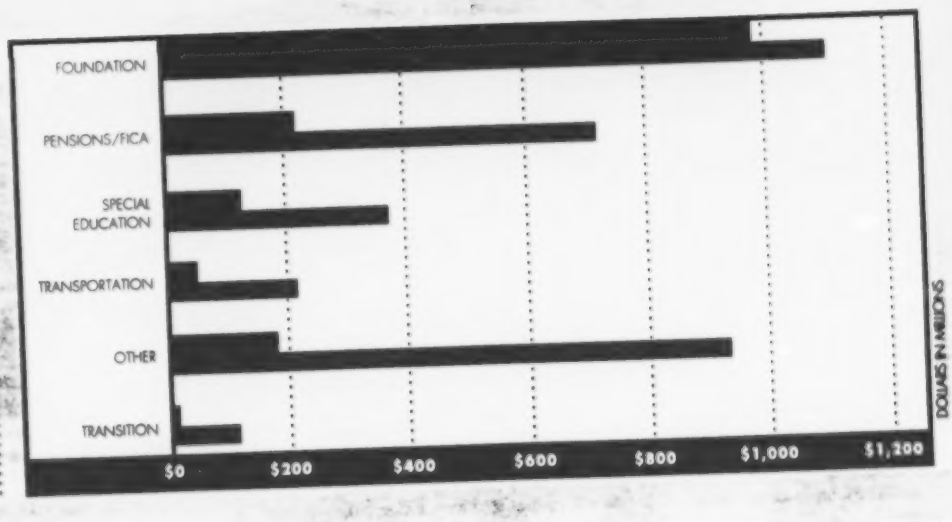
CHART B

Distribution of State Aid

From State and Local Revenues



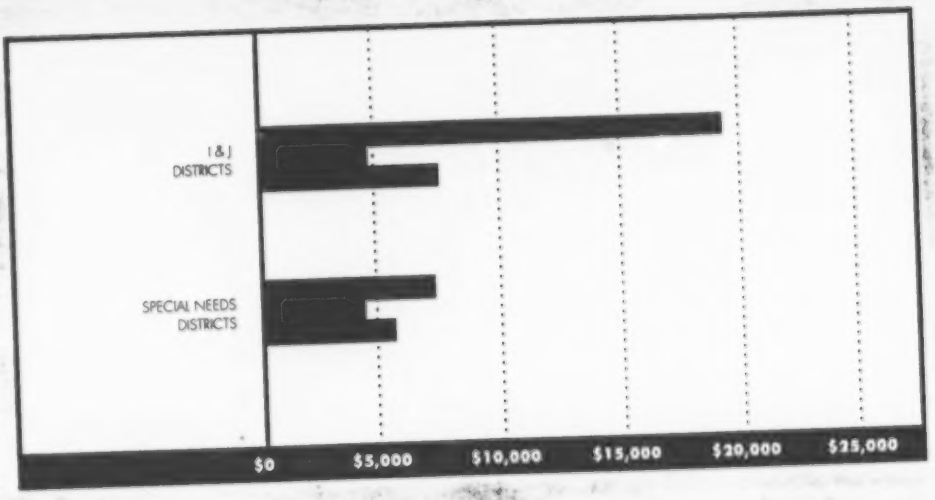
SPECIAL NEEDS
ALL OTHERS

Source
New Jersey Department of Education for School Year 1991/1992

CHART C

Per Pupil Spending

Wealthy (I&J) Districts vs. Special Needs Districts



HIGHEST
LOWEST
AVERAGE

Source
New Jersey Department of Education
Based on 1991/92 Estimates

APPENDIX SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT MATRIX

	State	District	School
Goals / Standards	Adapt National Goals Establish State Goals: Math, Science, Arts, English,History,Foreign Languages, et al.	Adapt goals to district Assist schools with formation of realistic goals	Adopt district goals Implement school-site plan for reform
Implementation	Incentive grants-priority to schools in special needs and low-income districts Provide leadership and financial training Suspend monitoring of implementing schools for at least two years Provide support and encouragement	Provide lump-sum budgets Joint application with schools for grants Approve budget and goals	Receive training for parents and teachers Create council with at least parents, teachers and principal Create goals Develop budget
Curriculum	Adopt/create curriculum standards using models from NCTM, AAAS, NJ Alliance for the Arts Promote Restructuring Reforms	Adapt frameworks to district Encourage creativity in individual school programs Promote restructuring reforms	Adopt district frameworks Implement restructuring reform
Assessment	Adopt/create assessment tools for grades 4, 8,and 11 that are relevant for new curriculum Encourage classroom use of portfolio and performance-based testing	Select and approve appropriate tools for assessment with input from schools Develop accountability system with schools Ensure open reporting of reports to public	Assist district with selection of assessment tools Assist district with accountability system Implement use of portfolio and performance based tests
Technical assistance	Research and evaluate Technical Assistance programs Promote Inter-Agency collaboration Make Technical Assistance a top priority	Work with schools to select appropriate technical assistance Work to create solutions	Analyze needs Seek appropriate assistance Work to create solutions
Training	Gradual movement to five year teacher training programs Review and strengthen certification Continue opening of Professional Development Schools Continue alternate route with oversight and modification Increased scholarship/loan forgiveness to minorities	Recommend staff selection Recommend staff development policies Monitor training for alternate route teachers	Choose staff Choose staff development policies Ensure alternate route teachers receive mentoring
Monitoring	Gradual deregulation of academic monitoring Monitor distribution of resources to ensure financial equity and integrity Grant waivers from state guidelines when appropriate	Monitor school budget and goals Monitor distribution of resouces to ensure financial equity and integrity Grant waivers from district guidelines when appropriate	Carry out regulatory requirements Seek waivers to to enhance creative practices and programs

Student Goals, p. 3.

I am troubled by the commission's endorsement of the National Educational Goals. I believe them to be unrealistic and self-serving. Our goals should focus on what we can realistically do for New Jersey school children.

RAYMOND BATEMAN

While I can agree that the National Education Goals are ambitious and have attracted interest and support from some of the public, media and other states, I have seen no evidence that supports the contention that the goals were carefully developed, in fact there is no definition of "first in the world" and little rationale beyond market place competition. Whether they set appropriate targets is very debatable and there is no inclusion of adequate funding with which to meet the National Goals, but since they exist and New Jersey will be measured against them for the next 10 years we must at least acknowledge them and adapt them to meet the needs of New Jersey. There is no need for a wholesale endorsement of the National Education Goals by New Jersey.

It is important that New Jersey develop its own goals, that are broader and more comprehensive than the National Goals.

I propose two additional New Jersey goals:

One of New Jersey's goals should be to have every school provide comprehensive parent/guardian involvement programs. The one factor that most assures a child's success in school is having a parent/guardian involved with the child's education. Setting other goals while ignoring this factor is short-sighted on the part of the Commission and will actually inhibit the successful attainment of the other goals. It is essential to have every school provide programs that encourage and enhance parental/guardian involvment. Programs that allow all parents/guardians to be partners in their child's education, not bystanders or cheerleaders, will assure student success and must be acknowledged as imperative. Site-based management alone is not a substitute for quality parental involvement programs since it only provides for 1 or possibly 2 parents' input on the site's council. Experience in Chicago and Miami indicates the need to go beyond a small council dealing with administrative decisions if student outcomes are the aim.

Another New Jersey goal should be to provide adequate funding for education to meet the goals that are set. The most lofty goals will be nothing but meaningless PR without adequate funding to accomplish them.

PAULA COOVER

Since the federal government has decided to restrict its efforts to encouraging others to do something about education, the National Education Goals are meaningless or impractical as a guide for state actions. Instead of "adopting" these goals, the State of New Jersey should be encouraged to "adapt" them to the realities of the State. Indeed, this is what the State Board of Education will be doing in the light of this report of the Quality Education Commission, the Governor's Monitoring Task Force, and other reports on educational goals and management.

JAMES JONES

School Based Management, p. 15.

I dissent from supporting mandatory implementation of site-based management at every school site in New Jersey. A better mandate (if there is to be a mandate) would be to require community involvement in every public school and allow individual districts to implement this in a manner that assures local control in the design. This would assure that individual community differences be appreciated and provide a better alternative rather that a cookie-cutter approach. Experience in Chicago and Miami indicates the need to go beyond a small council dealing with administrative decisions if student outcomes are the aim.

In New Jersey a type of site-based management already occurs effectively when school boards, superintendent, principals, teachers, parents and community members work cooperatively to provide the best for their children. Mandating site-based management will not automatically create a group that works cooperatively in every school nor draw into involvement with their own child's education those parents who are absentee or uninformed or unskilled in helping their child learn. It may in fact cause such a distraction as to negate positive measures already in existence, since it is both time-consuming to implement and costs money to train participants to be effective. The funds are better spent in giving parents skills to help their child. Site-based management is often touted as parental involvement and it does indeed involve 1 or 2 parents in the council. It should not be used as a substitute for programs that give all parents the opportunity to be partners in their children's education (the one factor that most closely correlates with children's success in school). Most importantly, recent site-based management pilot programs have failed to demonstrate much positive influence on student outcomes. Since improving student outcomes should be the paramount thrust of educational reform, limited resources should first be allocated to those measures shown to improve student outcomes.

PAULA COOVER

School District Consolidation, p. 19.

While I strongly support incentives and other efforts to substantially reduce the number of school districts by consolidation and reorganization, I do not support a military base closure type commission. Such a commission would force consolidation without constitutent community voter approval and with only all-or-nothing veto by the legislature and the governor. This procedure is much too arbitrary and harsh for major public education decisions.

RAYMOND BATEMAN

The Commission [to study consolidation] should set its own criteria to select the districts to be redistricted. The goal of redistricting should be to better serve the needs of the children. Cost-cutting factors should not have greater weight than improving service to children.

PAULA COOVER

The issue of consolidation would be best addressed as a local, voluntary process with community involvement free of restricting state mandates. In the absence of mandates, the Commission's concern is that regionalization will take place at an extremely slow pace, if at all, unless local school boards and municipal government bodies are given some reason to pursue the process. Toward this end, I would support substantial financial incentives to encourage consolidation and would remain opposed to mandated consolidation. Districts should be given the opportunity to reject consolidation for substantive reasons.

BETTY KRAEMER

New Jersey is one of the most segregated states in the nation with regard to school districts. It is also one of the few which is currently becoming even more segregated. The proposed new commission should address this issue and have the authority to require consolidation to achieve the desegregation of school districts within a region.

CONSTANCE CLOONAN, CAROLE GRAVES AND JAMES JONES

Teacher Tenure, p. 25.

I oppose the commission decision to duck the tenure problem by passing it to yet another commission. I support a five-year probation teaching period before tenure and significant simplification of the removal process of non-performing tenured teachers.

RAYMOND BATEMAN

The real issue at hand goes beyond tenure. Although New Jersey has very many skilled, dedicated, effective teachers, the overall effectiveness of our 100,000 teachers and other support personnel can and should be further enhanced through better recruiting, training, leadership, and motivation.

Many elements have a bearing on the above. One deals with merit pay and/or merit bonuses. Despite strong union preferences to the contrary, I strongly advocate a merit component within compensation, as is effec-

tively done in the private sector, in order to motivate, recognize, and reward superior teaching performance.

Conversely, we must recognize that school systems, as all other employment systems, will have poor performers whose shortfalls do not get remedied. In such instances, the sole remaining recourse that doesn't weaken teaching effectiveness is to remove the unsatisfactory teacher. Although procedures already exist to permit such severance, the actual involuntary termination history of many school districts suggests that existing terminating procedures and associated management practices need to be revised to accomplish more effective, timely personnel changes, when justified.

For example, in a typical year only 10 New Jersey tenured teachers are involuntarily terminated in a universe of well over 50,000. No large professional organization could possibly have so few ineffective performers.

I, therefore, support the Commission's recommendation that a special task force be appointed by the governor to recommend a faster, better termination process to both the legislature and the Department of Education, for both tenured and non-tenured personnel. Their recommendations might well include a quick termination procedure within which any school superintendent, with the approval of his/her board, may submit a request for tenure removal directly to a 3-person state tenure board, whose quick hearing and subsequent findings shall be binding on all parties, without subsequent court recourse.

The duration of current de-tenure procedures is said to typically be a year, at considerable expense in time and money, with a dozen or more procedural and appellate steps. It is no wonder that boards initiate and succeed in so few such actions.

Current resistance to a removal of the "lifetime guarantee" is all the more understandable (but inexcusable) when one contemplates that New Jersey's teachers get substantial, automatic annual raises, regardless of performance and competence, until they reach salaries as high as $70,000 for 9-month years, accompanied by extremely generous and growing retirement benefits that are considerably higher than prevails outside of school systems. It is no wonder that tenured teachers and their bargaining representatives cling tenaciously to each such highly-paid, prized, tenured positions. Concurrently, starting teachers are often offered as little as $22,000, which hardly attracts the best candidates.

I believe that the recommended task force also should address related issues of merit pay, salary guidelines and practices for teachers, and the extremely generous teachers' health care and pension benefits programs.

JOSH WESTON

Lengthening the School Day/Year, p. 28.

I strongly oppose lengthening the school year. The large expenditures involved can be better utilized in specific programs aimed at improving educational opportunities for children who need help.

RAYMOND BATEMAN

Report Card, p. 34.

This is not a priority, especially since the state will be reporting its success in meeting the National Education Goals on an annual basis (whether it adopts the National Goals or not) and the compilation of that data will be costly enough. If there is to be an individual school report card, it should contain accurate and timely data that can actually be used; using already limited resources for this project would divert funds from programs that actually reach children which should be the first priority. Only after you have fully funded that priority should the discussion of report cards be held.

PAULA COOVER

Pension and Social Security Costs, p. 43.

I am disappointed that the Commission was not able to reach agreement on a compromise position with respect to payments of pensions and Social Security. I strongly believe that the practice by the State of paying all the local districts' share of the employer's contributions to the Teachers Pension and Annuity Fund and Social Security must be discontinued. This practice is counter-equalizing, since affluent districts receive more of these State dollars than do poorer districts, and will eventually result in serious constraints on money for programs designed to improve educational quality. In addition, the practice gives no incentive to control pension costs at the local level.

FRED ABBATE

Focusing discussion on whether the state or the local district should pay for the costs of pension and social security did not allow for a thorough examination of the whole pension and social security issue. While state payment of the costs may be disequalizing, that does not necessarily mean that the only solution is to have the local districts pick up some or all of the costs. It is the solution that frees up state tax dollars in the simplest manner for the state government, yet thereby creates fiscal havoc in many localities. New Jersey must find a way to construct the financing of pension and social security that does not impact any child's educational welfare negatively. The Commission did not find that answer, but it is the answer that is needed to end the debates.

PAULA COOVER

We dissent from the report of the Quality Education Commission to express our conviction regarding the need to establish equity and fiscal responsibility in education funding by the State. In particular, we recommend that the State discontinue paying the entire amount of local districts' contribution to the Teachers Pension and Annuity Fund and Social Security. This form of aid is highly counter-equalizing, which means that affluent districts receive more of these dollars per pupil than poor districts do. For example, State pension payments amount to $1037 per pupil in Ridgewood and $1066 in Millburn, but only $552 in Camden and $617 in Irvington. Indeed, the average discrepancy in such payments between affluent and poor districts is approximately $300 per pupil.

We agree with the Commission report's "guiding principle" that "the vast majority of all State education aid should be wealth-equalized to ensure equity," and we therefore cannot understand the logic of the majority's position on this issue. State funding of pensions and social security actually rewards districts that are more affluent, since these districts generate the highest per pupil cost in pension and social security contributions. We believe that it is not fiscally responsible to spend scarce State resources to provide more pension and social security dollars per pupil to wealthy districts than to poor and middle income districts. Improved educational programs, teacher development, social services, and facilities all deserve higher priority than counter-equalizing State aid to affluent districts.

The Supreme Court has stated in Abbott that so long as fiscal and educational disparities between poor and affluent districts remain, the State cannot give aid to affluent districts that is "counter-equalizing, that increases funding disparities, and that has no arguable educational or administrative justification." We believe that State aid for teacher pension and social security costs fails to satisfy this standard.

State aid for pension and social security costs will undoubtedly consume an ever-increasing share of the State's education dollars. As these costs grow, it is predictable that they will squeeze out State aid that is intended to get to the classrooms where it is most needed. Indeed, it is now anticipated that fully 65% of the $200 million increase in State education aid for 1992-93 will be consumed by these teacher pension and social security

costs. This growth in pension costs will cause foundation aid to decrease by 1.6%, dropping from $2.06 billion in the current year to $2.03 billion in 1992-93. Because the special needs districts are largely protected from this reduction, this means that all other foundation aid districts will lose an averge of 25% of their foundation aid.

We are convinced that we can attain high quality outcomes through equitable access to resources without sacrificing standards of excellence in 'lighthouse' districts. We can level up and must avoid leveling down. Because of our commitment to this goal, we do not recommend total assumption of pension and social security costs by local districts, but rather call for partial assumption to eliminate the counter-equalizing effects of the present system.

CONSTANCE CLOONAN, ANN AUERBACH, JAMES JONES, REGINA MARSHALL AND DON RAINEAR

GENERAL COMMENTS

Governor Florio's charge to the Commission included a request that we provide recommendations regarding changes to the QEA that are consistent with the Supreme Court's rulings. We believe that the Commission has not adequately addressed this portion of our mandate. We provide our recommendations below.

In our view, the QEA has failed to assure that the educational funding of poorer districts will be substantially equal to that of the property rich districts. The QEA, as amended, leaves children in poor school districts farther from achieving parity with their neighbors in 1991-92 than they were in 1989-90. Moreover, the present provisions of the QEA are unlikely to achieve fiscal equality in the foreseeable future. We agree with experts such as Dr. Margaret Goertz who have found that the provisions of the QEA make it virtually impossible for the State to assure that spending parity will be reached by 1995-96.

The QEA has also had a direct and negative impact on the educational offerings provided by the 30 "special needs" districts. Pursuant to the QEA, these districts were required to draw up educational improvement plans based upon the recommendations of State-appointed external review teams and to submit them to the State for approval. However, as a result of the funding restrictions in the amendments to the QEA, these districts have either been unable to implement their plans or have been able to implement them only in crippled form. For example, in Trenton, the district was forced to eliminate the Slavin "Success for All" program (the same program that the Commission's majority report urges for all urban districts), eliminate new art teachers and new art equipment, eliminate new science equipment, eliminate new music teachers and music equipment, eliminate new computer and physical education teachers, eliminate new librarians, eliminate new supervisors for fine and performing arts, eliminate $614,000 worth of new teachers who were to have reduced class sizes in elementary grades, eliminate new guidance counselors, reduce after-school enrichment programs by 86%, eliminate two new initiatives designed to reduce drop-outs, eliminate bi-lingual parent training, and eliminate other initiatives.

These tragic impacts are caused by the critical flaws in the Quality Education Act, as amended. In addition to the States's counter-equalizing payments for teacher pension and social security aid, there are three major problems. The first is foundation aid. The QEA's formula for foundation aid will simply not achieve spending parity in the foreseeable future. We believe the the QEA must be amended to ensure that the less affluent districts achieve 100% parity with their more affluent neighbors by 1995-96.

Another inadequacy is that the QEA fails to ensure that poor districts will be able to maintain spending parity with affluent districts. The QEA relies on spending caps to assure this spending equality. The statute's cap provision is too permeable to accomplish this objective. The problem is that an affluent district can exceed its cap if the citizens of the district vote to permit it to do so.

Finally, the QEA's provisions for the special educational needs of poorer districts needs to be revised. The Commission's report suggests that the QEA provides adequate funding to meet these needs by providing "at risk" aid. This aid was not, however, designed to pay the actual cost of providing programs to meet such special needs. Indeed, the actual cost of such programs has not been calculated.

ANN AUERBACH, CONSTANCE CLOONAN

I do not support the statewide implementation of the Plan to Revise Special Education. Although P2R has been around for many years and piloted in 12 model districts, little evidence is available that P2R positively impacts student outcomes. Although P2R is touted as a way to save costs, there are costs to implement P2R properly in a district. In the pilot districts, no studies were made on the effect of P2R on the learning of the "regular" classroom students. Only certain classifications were piloted, yet the plan calls for all classifications to be included in the implementation. There are simply too many unknown effects upon the learning of the children in the classroom (student outcomes!) to justify the implementation of P2R across the state because it "should have a positive effect on controlling such costs".

PAULA COOVER

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APPENDIX B I B L I O G R A P H Y

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